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RIDDLES IN BANTU

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SYNOPSIS

Riddles are part of the culture of a people, and therefore are often surrounded with taboos. There are many riddles in different Bantu languages which are so alike that it is probable that they have a common origin, but this is not always easy to prove. Riddles are educational because of their varied content, but their primary aim is recreational. They refer to nature as a whole, and to the material and spiritual culture of the people. A great variety of structures, both in the "question" part and in the answer of the riddle, including rhythm and balance of forms, are among their characteristic features.

Introduction

1. The riddle combines recreational and educational features to an unusual degree. Young people love riddles for the amusement they provide; old people encourage their use because of their instructive value. These two aspects are reflected (*a*) in the very varied contents of the riddles, and (*b*) in their form, which is subtly adapted to the diversity of subjects referred to.

Because of their recreational and educational features, riddles are socially very significant, and therefore it is not surprising to find that among many tribes taboos are associated with their use.

Their great variety of contents and forms and their social importance make of riddles a most interesting and inspiring subject of study. If one compares the riddles found among many Bantu peoples, one is struck by the resemblances often found. Although many riddles have been collected by various authors, little comparative study of their social importance and of their structure and contents has been made so far. It is a comparative study, dealing with these various points, which will be attempted in this paper.

1.1. For the most part, the original orthography has been retained for the various examples of riddles quoted here. However, in the case of some South African languages, e.g. Kgatla (Kxatla) the spelling has been brought into line with present-day prescriptions. In some cases too, where the structures involved were quite clear, some modifications in the word-division have been introduced. For typographical reasons also, it has been necessary to substitute β for the *w* with circumflex of Lamba, Mwera and Makua, and for the special *v* of Shona, both representing a voiced bilabial fricative; *sv* and *zv* for the symbols representing the voiceless and voiced "whistling" fricatives of Shona; and *d* for the symbol representing the voiced alveolar implosive of Shona.

Full bibliographical details of all the references cited are given in the bibliography at the end of the article.

The Social Setting of the Riddle

2. Few collectors of Bantu riddles have mentioned how and by whom riddles are indulged in as a pastime. This is an unfortunate omission, for much can be learnt about the value and purpose of Bantu riddles by observing what section of the community is most interested in them, and how important a part they play in the life of the people. The following information does throw some light on this question, however.

Doke, in his article "Bantu Wisdom Lore", describes the riddle as a form of entertainment

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"commonly indulged in around the fire at night, particularly by the young folk of the village."[1] This is too general a statement, for usages determining who makes use of the riddle, and at what particular time of the year or of the day, may vary considerably from tribe to tribe.

2.1. Among the *Kgatla*,

(*a*) It seems that riddles may be asked throughout the whole year.

(*b*) The evening is the appropriate time for riddles, and any child heard asking them during the day will be threatened that "a dog will place a calabash of fat on your head and you will (have to) go about with it"[2], which statement is a common warning given to children. The child may even be sworn at or beaten.

(*c*) Riddles are indulged in mainly by children or young people.

(*d*) Two individuals or two teams may ask riddles of each other.

2.2. Nakene mentions that among the *Tlokwa* (Northern Sotho),

(*a*) Riddles may be asked at any time of the year,

(*b*) But they are asked only in the evening, mainly indoors, and anyone asking riddles during the day-time is threatened with becoming a fool.

(*c*) They are never used by the older people, unless an adult joins the young people to teach them how riddles should be asked.

(*d*) The team system seems to prevail. Nakene does not mention the possibility of only two people quizzing one another.

2.3. Among the *Tsonga-Ronga* tribes,

(*a*) The asking of riddles is not restricted to any particular time of the year.

(*b*) But only the evenings are considered suitable for riddles and telling of folktales. Junod mentions the common belief that persons who tell folktales during the day will become bald, but he does not specify what will be the fate of those who ask riddles at that time; possibly the same thing will befall them, as Junod treats those two evening pastimes together.

(*c*) Riddles are indulged in by young and old people, as an indoor game in winter, and occasionally as an outdoor game when the weather is suitable.

(*d*) They are mainly asked by competitive teams, although the game may be played by two children.

2.4. Among the *Shona*,

(*a*) Riddles, like the telling of folktales and the singing of songs, are usually banned "during the months when the crops are ripening and ready for the harvest and for threshing."[3]

(*b*) Riddle games take place only in the evening and are mainly an indoor form of entertainment.

(*c*) Children and adults alike entertain themselves by asking riddles.

(*d*) The games may be played "between two individuals or two sides".[3]

2.5. *Lamba:* Doke does not mention if there is any restriction as to when riddles may be asked, he merely states that "playing at riddles (*ukutyoneka*) is a favourite pastime around the evening fire".[4] Children play at this game two at a time according to Doke's description, but there is no indication as to whether adults may participate, or whether team competitions take place.

2.6. Lyndon Harries gives no details of the playing of riddles in Mwera[5]; in *Makua*[6], however, he mentions that

(*a*) Riddles are asked in the evening only; a person who asks riddles or tells folktales in the day-time would grow horns.

[1] C. M. Doke, "Bantu Wisdom Lore", p. 17.
[2] I. Schapera, "Kxatla Riddles and their significance", p. 215.
[3] G. Fortune, "Some Zezuru and Kalanga Riddles", p. 30.
[4] C. M. Doke, *Lamba Folk-lore*, p. 549.
[5] L. Harries, "Some riddles of the Mwera people".
[6] L. Harries, "Some riddles of the Makua people".

(*b*) No details are given of participants. Harries's description is of two persons playing the game, and he says nothing about teams.

2.7. Concerning the *Ila*, Smith and Dale mention that the riddles are asked in the evening, but they do not mention seasonal taboos or details of participants (Vol. II, p. 324 ff.).

2.8. From the title of Comhaire-Sylvain's article "Quelques devinettes des enfants noirs de Léopoldville" it would seem that riddles are mainly the concern of children, although at the end of her article she mentions a riddle with proverbial reference which is used by adults and never by children. She gives no information about the time for riddle games, or the way riddles are asked.

2.9. Among the *Kamba*,

(*a*) Riddles are asked in the evening mainly. However, it seems that the Kamba do not object to telling riddles during the day, since Lindblom says "A good many riddles I have also got from my porters while halting on a march."

(*b*) Children and adults enjoy guessing riddles.

(*c*) Lindblom gives no indication that riddles may be asked by two teams, rather than by two individuals.

2.10. From this brief survey, it is clear that in most cases riddles are considered mainly as a form of entertainment, and therefore are indulged in in the evenings and during the less busy months of the year. Although it is mostly young people who indulge in this pastime, in some tribes adults may also join in the fun. Either two individuals or two teams may compete in riddle games.

The Function of Riddles

3. It is clear from what has just been said that riddles have a much more restricted role in the people's life than proverbs. Riddles are often the concern of only one section of the community, and their use is usually restricted by certain taboos or traditions, whereas the proverb is a part of everyday speech. It follows that riddles have a more restricted and definite function than proverbs, although like proverbs they are an integral part of the people's culture and traditions. These functions are as follows:

(*a*) The main function of the riddle is as entertainment, and this is consciously recognized, whereas other functions of riddles are often not recognized at all by the people.

(*b*) The riddle also acts as an exercise of intellectual skill and quickness of wit; it becomes a test of memory with those riddles whose answers have to be learnt by heart to be known.

(*c*) Nakene[1] points out that many riddles are instructive, as they may mention geographical names or contain reference to historical events. Certainly they develop a sense of observation, and often contain elaborate and rich linguistic forms.

Like proverbs, riddles are educational in their content, which is based on experience and observation. The educational value of riddles is a consequence of their cultural content, but their primary purpose is for entertainment.

The Origin of Bantu Riddles

4. Some riddles are widespread throughout the Bantu area, and this immediately raises the question as to whether they have a common origin.

Q. *Ndamanga nyumba yanga yopanda khomo.* A. *Dzira* (I have built my house without any door. An egg) [Nyanja][2]

Q. *Nyumba yangu kubwa, haina mlango.* A. *Yayi* (My house is large, it has no door. An egg) [Swahili]

Q. *Ntlo yagotlhôka molômo.* A. *Lekgopa* (A house without a mouth. An egg) [Tlokwa]

Q. *Mpolêllê dilô, ompolêllê gore ntlo êtshwêu êesenang mojakô keeng?* A. *Kelee* (Tell me something, tell me what is the white hut which has no door? It is an egg) [Kgatla]

[1] G. Nakene, "Tlokwa Riddles".
[2] Q=Question; A=Answer. The language of the riddle is given in brackets in each case.

Q. *Akaŋanda mbuluβulu?* A. *Mbesana: lili-po nemulyaŋgo?* (A little house absolutely entire? An egg: has it any door?) [Lamba]

Q. *Nyama moko asalaki ndako, kasi ezangi porte, ezangi lininisa, yango nini?* A. *Like* (An animal built a house, but it lacks a door, it lacks windows, what is it? An egg) [Lingala]

Q. *Ndzinghenile ndlwini yamanana, ndzikume xilo xohava nomu.* A. *Itandza* (I entered my mother's house, I found something without a mouth. It is an egg) [Tsonga]

Q. *Wuruwuru kayano.* A. *Nyoce* (Round with no mouth. An egg) [Makua]

Q. *Caŋgali nnaŋgo.* A. *Liji* (It has no door. An egg) [Mwera]

Q. *Zihari risina musuo.* A. *Zai* (The huge pot without an opening. An egg) [Zezuru]

4.1. It is interesting to note the variations between these riddles in the setting of the problem. In the first seven examples the egg is compared to a house, and then reference is made to its lacking an opening of some sort (mouth, door, window). In Mwera, although the word "house" does not appear in the riddle, it is nevertheless implied. In Makua, the egg is described but not compared to anything, and in Zezuru it is compared to a big pot. Note that in the Tsonga riddle the "house" concept does not refer to the egg itself: the object without a mouth was found *in the house*. Again, in most of these riddles the mouth or opening concept appears in the question part of the riddle. In Lamba, however, it is in the answer that it is referred to, and in the form of a question. This shifting of "elements", common in folktales, is a most interesting feature of riddles which deserves investigation.

4.2. The following four riddles use the same metaphor to describe the mushroom, and it is tempting to suggest for them a common origin. However, the shape of most mushrooms is so similar to that of a hut, that the comparison is an easy and natural one, and it would be unwise to dogmatize about these riddles having a single origin.

Q. *Ndako moko ezali na likonzi yoko.* A. *Liyebo* (There is a house with only one pillar. A mushroom) [Lingala]

Q. *Nyumba jikuluŋgwa lwici limo-pe.* A. *Uβai.* (A big house, only one supporting post. A mushroom) [Mwera]

Q. *Iŋande yemama luhomelo lumo.* A. *Uβahi* (My mother's house, one supporting post. A mushroom) [Makonde]

Q. *Ndamanga nyumba yamzati umodzi.* A. *Boa* (I have built a house with one centre post. A mushroom) [Nyanja]

In the case of Kgatla and Ganda the comparison used to describe the mushroom is more far-fetched, and if, after some investigation, it were found widely spread, one could more readily postulate a single origin for this riddle:

Q. *Kgaka yaseêma-kankoto, serope kentsê-tsênênê.* A. *Keleboa* (The guinea-fowl that stands on one leg, its thigh is very tasty. A type of edible mushroom) [Kgatla]

Q. *Obunagenzere Buganda, bakamba enkoko yokuguru kumu.* (I went to Buganda and the people gave me a one legged chicken to eat) [Ganda]

In the Kgatla riddle is added an explanation about the taste of the guinea-fowl's leg, which explanation is not essential to the comprehension of the riddle and is somewhat superfluous. However, this provides an important link with the idea of eating in the Ganda version, and suggests that the answer refers to something edible.

4.3. Many more riddles are found in various tribes, and resemble each other so strongly that polygenesis is distinctly doubtful. However, a great many riddles are not related. In his *Lamba Folklore*, p. 549, Doke mentions that many riddles may be found in one village and be totally unknown in the next. Junod seems to imply the same thing when he says of riddles: "Some are the common property of both the Ba-Ronga and Ba-Nkuna; they seem to be very popular throughout the Thonga tribe"[1]. Such

[1]H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, Vol. II, p. 181.

a statement implies that other riddles occur in one section of the tribe only.

If some resemblance between the riddles is found, it must be remembered that this may be due to the fact that this type of folklore is based very much on observation: such things as fire, the stars, a mealie-cob, etc., retain their general characteristics wherever they are found, and can easily give rise to very similar images.

A few other reasons make the task of determining the origin of riddles more difficult than is the case with proverbs, for instance:

(*a*) Fewer riddles have been recorded than proverbs.

(*b*) Few, or no riddles are related to folktales, and this eliminates the possibility of tracing the origin or diffusion of a riddle through a folktale (the diffusion of a folktale is easier to trace than that of a short form such as a proverb or a riddle.)

(*c*) Riddles are the result of wit and deliberate invention and therefore are more likely to vary in form than proverbs.

Only a thorough investigation might give some clues as to the origin of some riddles.

Types of Bantu Riddles and their Form

5. This section will be subdivided into two main parts: 1. *General Structure*, where the various types of riddles, and their literary form and structure as a whole will be considered. In part 2, *Linguistic Structure*, details of word and grammatical forms will be considered.

Part 1: General Structure

6. *The "Frame" of the Riddle in Bantu*

Often riddles are presented within a "frame", or formula, i.e. a specific, stereotyped phrase which is associated with either the question or answer part of the riddle, or both.

In Kgatla "the question is framed in the formula *Mpolêllê dilô, ompolêllê gore . . . keeng?* (Tell me something, tell me what is . . .?)[1]. After the first riddle the formula is often omitted or only *Mpolêllê* (Tell me) is retained.

Among the Ronga-Tsonga *Teka, teka, teka, heee . . .* (Take, take take . . .) precedes the riddle. *Tseke-tseke, wakutseke . . .* or simply *Tseke-tseke . . .* is often heard too.

The Lamba say *Tyo*!, an expression which means "Guess the riddle", before each riddle, and the person challenged answers *Ka kesa* (Let it come) or *Ka muleta* (Bring it).

The Kamba say *Kwata ndai* (Take hold of the riddle) before putting a riddle to a person, and the opponent answers *Nakwata* (I have caught hold). Then the first person presents the riddle itself.

In Zezuru there does not seem to be any formula of this type, although the game is often started when a person challenges another with *Hatitaurirane zirahwe* (Let us swop riddles). In Kalanga most riddle games are started with the challenge *Ngailibane* (Let us puzzle with one another).

6.1. In the sources consulted, only in Northern Sotho has a frame for the answer been found: *Yare*[2] *gokwa, kerialo: . . . kele bjang?* (On hearing I say: . . ., I being how?). The word which constitutes the answer is found in a possessive construction, as the possessor of *ngwana* (child), e.g.

Q. *Sehlaga saMmamašianoka, seôkama bodiba.*
A. *Yare gokwa kerialo: Ngwana-letswêlê lakgômo, kele bjang?* (Nest of a hamerkop hangs (suspended) over the deep pool. On hearing I say: Child of the udder of a cow, I being how?)

The essential part of the answer here is "the udder of a cow", while the deep pool over which it hangs is the milkpail. The frame of the answer here might be more freely translated as "On hearing (your riddle) I say, . . . , how is that for an answer?". The hamerkop (*Scopus umbretta*) builds an enormous nest in a tree, usually in a branch overhanging water.

[1] I. Schapera, "Kxatla Riddles and their significance," p. 217.
[2] Alternatively *Kare*. . . .

7. *The "Question" part of the Riddle*

7.1. Interrogative form of the question.

(*a*) In a very great number of riddles, in the majority perhaps, the question part of the riddle takes the form of a simple statement, positive or negative. However, this is not always the case, and therefore Doke's statement "Though interrogative in intent riddles are never so in form in Bantu,"[1] and Lindblom's similar remark,[2] are perhaps applicable to many Bantu languages, but not true of all of them. In Tsonga, Ronga, and Tswana (Kgatla) it is very common to find an interrogative word in the question.

Q. *Lexi, nambi waba, ntshonsi wakone wungabonekiki, ntxini?* A. *Imati* (The thing which you can beat without leaving a scar, what is it? Water) [Ronga]

Q. *Intxini lexi, loko bahlota xone, batekaka khume djatinhonga kambe kuyadlaya tibiri?* A. *Inhwala* (What is the thing which you hunt with ten sticks, and which you use only two sticks to kill? A louse) [Ronga]

(*b*) The very formula of the Kgatla riddle, *Mpolêllê dilô, mpolêllê gore . . . keeng?* is interrogative in form. Tlokwa also has a few riddles with an interrogative "question".

Q. *Sekanyanakanyana, mafoko seatsaya kae?* A. *Ketaola* (It is so very small, whence does it take the words? It is the divining bone) [Kgatla]

Q. *Kahampa-kahampa katswalêla kae?* A. *Thaba* (I keep on going along where shall I bear? A mountain) [Tlokwa]

(*c*) Note also the following song-riddle in Makua:

Q. *Neninne? Neninne? Salakela, ikereca inorwa, inokela unatiβira; Kwiria, Inama yani?* A. *Haβara* (Who is that? Who is that? *salakela*, the spots are going, they are going into hiding; It is said, What animal is that? The leopard)

7.2. Simple sentence type.

Usually the "question" of the riddle consists of a simple sentence, a mere statement with some description of the thing to be guessed.

Q. *Kanthu kosagona tulo.* A. *Madzi* (Something which does not sleep. Water) [Nyanja]

Q. *Akanama takakwete mafupa.* A. *Mbomunsundu* (A little animal without bones. The leech) [Lamba]

Q. *Diphiri tsêtlhano tsêditsênang mômosimêng ole mongwe.* A. *Kemenwana* (Five hyenas which go into the same hole. It is the fingers) [Kgatla]

Q. *Kuku wangu akazalia miibani.* A. *Nanasi* (My hen has laid among thorns. A pine-apple) [Swahili]

7.3. Compound sentence type:

(*a*) Often the "question" consists of more than one statement.

Q. *Selô semakhuntukhuntu ekete setlaitsidila, pôtô emôgodimo gasônê, mme dinaka ekete tsapholo.* A. *Kekgopana* (The crooked thing seems as if it will stretch itself, a pot is on top of it, and its horns are like those of an ox. It is a snail) [Kgatla]

Q. *Nnamba tie liwundi bata.* A. *Liunde nalitaka* (The glossy starling above, the owl beneath. Heaven and earth) [Mwera]

Q. *Uhokala mwiri mmoka, irinta cefe cikitthi, matthakuru meli, irinta pili cowuma.* A. *Ipuri* (There is a tree, it has four fresh branches, two leaves, and two dry branches. A goat) [Makua]

(*b*) The second statement is often a further explanation of the first one. In this type of "question" the subject of both sentences is usually the same.

Q. *Akantu aka fwale'ŋguo ituβile, pakwinjila pamenda, neli kutontola, i?* A. *Mbecusi* (A little thing that dresses in white calico, when it enters the water, it does not even get wet. Steam) [Lamba]

[1] C. M. Doke, "Bantu Wisdom-Lore," p. 117.
[2] G. Lindblom, "Kamba Riddles, Proverbs and Songs," p. 4.

Q. *Intxini amixweni xifamba himune wamilenge, ninhlekani xifamba hamimbiri, amadambyeni loko dambu djipelile xifamba himilenge miraru?* A. *Imunhu* (What is it that walks with four legs in the morning, with two legs at midday, and with three legs in the evening, when the sun has gone down? It is a person) [Ronga][1]

(*c*) The second statement, or the third, may be negative.

Q. *Kukuya ndachiyana, ku kuzhoka shichiyene.* A. *Mume* (Going I found it, returning I found it not. Dew) [Ila]

Q. *Ngunda gwaŋkuluŋgwa kuuna yalya ŋgagumbala mkono.* A. *Umbo* (A big field, harvesting the food, it does not fill the hand. The hair of the head) [Mwera]

Q. *Mpolêllê, bana bankêtê baabina, mmaabô gaabine.* A. *Kedikala tsasetlhare* (The children of someone are dancing, their mother does not dance. It is the branches of a tree) [Kgatla]

(*d*) The Lamba riddle given above, referring to steam, also illustrates a third statement which is negative. No riddle with two negative statements was found, but quite possibly some of this type do exist.

(*e*) The whole "question" part of the riddle may be a negative statement.

Q. *Nyumba jaŋgu jaŋgali taa.* A. *Likabuli* (My house has no lamp. The grave) [Mwera]

Q. *Nanjeŋguli ŋgamoga.* A. *Mbwa* (Mr Patch does not cut his hair. A dog) [Mwera]

Q. *Caŋgaunicila.* A. *Liiko* (What is not covered. A well) [Mwera]

(*f*) The whole statement may be reduplicated.

Q. *Tsheke, tsheke, xo gi, xo gi!* A. *Xirhendzevuti* (It goes round, it goes round.[2] A circle) [Tsonga]

Q. *Leno vatshivela ndzilo, leno vatshivela ndzilo.* A. *Leno vaba ngoma, leno vaba ngoma* (They just kindle a fire, they just kindle a fire. They just beat a drum, they just beat a drum) [Tsonga] (A mere comparison)

Q. *Adzoti, adzoti, axaya.* A. *Tiko* (I tried to do it, I tried to do it, I failed. The back of the head) [Kalanga]

7.4. The short-story type.

A few riddles have been noticed in the above examples, which consist of more than one statement. It is but one step from there to the very lengthy riddles. It is really quite arbitrary to sub-divide such riddles into different categories, but this will be done to contrast this type with those discussed under 7.5.

Q. *Eyenga ezali awa, kenda kobenga mokonzi! Obengi mokonzi, yo nainu okomi te, ye asili akomi o mboka.* A. *Mbila* (There is a feast here, go and call the chief! You call the chief, you have not yet arrived and yet he is already at the village. A cluster of palm-fruit) [Lingala]

Q. *Ndinapita kwa bwenzi langa nandiyalira mphasa, ndisanakhale anakhala ena.* A. *Ncence* (I went to my friend's (house understood), he spread a mat before me, before I sat others sat. A fly) [Nyanja]

Q. *Weta utthela maβafa. βano urwa maʃeŋgoni, kahokoleeke, inupa imoka uhitthia ilaku yonyocolia, inupa ikwawe uhitthia ilaku wapeiya nimapururu aya. βanoβa uruia iʃima inupa copili, kuwiheria mlopwana ole. Matthapa ombone paβi?* A. *Ilaku yohinyocolia* (To set out to marry two wives. Now to go to work, when I return, at one house a plucked fowl is killed, at the other house a fowl is cooked with its feathers. Now porridge is stirred in both houses and brought to the husband. Which is the better relish? The unplucked fowl [a symbol of the wife who during a man's absence at work has been faithful to him]) [Makua]

[1]The reference is, of course, to the "four-legged" crawling of a child, walking of an adult, and use of a stick as a "third leg" by an old person. A similar riddle was found for Shona. There exists a common English riddle which is essentially the same as these.

[2]*gi* is an ideophone—denoting the action of going round, turning.

7.5. One-word type.

As opposed to the long explanation, statements of one word only are also found to constitute the "question" part of the riddle.

Q. *Silitha.* A. *Tulo* (Never ending. Sleep) [Nyanja]

Q. *Sioneka.* A. *Mphepo* (Invisible. The wind) [Nyanja]

Q. *Osawerengeka.* A. *Maudzu* (Innumerable. The grass) [Nyanja]

Q. *Caŋgaunicila.* A. *Liiko* (What is not covered. A well) [Mwera]

7.6. Phrase type.

Under this heading could be classified all the riddles whose "question" consists of a possessive phrase (two words), or two words linked by a conjunctive formative, or a verb and adverb, etc.

Q. *Kuenda kwaCipegede.* A. *Nguruve* (The gait of the lumpish, ill-mannered person. The pig) [Zezuru] (Possessive phrase).

Q. *Xikhatu xatshuri.* A. *Likulu lamandza* (The bottom of the mortar. The large side of the egg) [Tsonga] (Possessive phrase).

Q. *Kalama nampemba.* A. *Mbeŋguo* (The watchman and the councillor. Calico) [Lamba] (Two coordinated nouns).

Q. *Icilila pamo.* A. *Mbeciwi* (That which eats in one place only. The door) [Lamba] (Relative and adverb).

Q. *Icine camusi.* A. *Mbensima* (The owner of the village. The porridge) [Lamba]. (Possessive phrase).

8. *The Answer to the Riddle*

8.1. For the majority of riddles the answer consists of one word only.

Q. *Shumba mbiri dzakagaririra gomo.* A. *Nzeve* (Two lions are waiting on the hill. The ears) [Zezuru]

Q. *Mokonzi moko, akofandaka se o kati ya nzube.* A. *Lolemo* (A chief who only sits among thorns. The tongue) [Lingala]

Q. *Malwa ate 'ntse'.* A. *Indlala* (The one who fights silently. It is hunger) [Tsonga]

Q. *Ndayaya intite, ibanda diezula buloa.* A. *Mudilo* (I killed a little bird and the plain filled with blood. The fire) [Ila]

Q. *Nimepanda koonde yangu kubwa, nimevuna, haujaa mkono.* A. *Nyele* (I sowed my big field and reaped it, and my hand was not full. Hair) [Swahili]

Q. *Ingombe yakesu ikumba butete.* A. *Mbwato* (Our cow rubs the reeds. A canoe) [Tonga]

8.2. Many answers consist of two words, nouns usually, often in a copulative construction. This is the case mainly when the question itself describes two things.

Q. *Tshimo êntsho emabêlê-maswêu.* A. *Kelegodimo ledinalêdi* (A black garden with white corn. It is the sky and the stars) [Kgatla]

Q. *Icine cimo, utunwa ikumi.* A. *Mbeculu nemisombo* (Itself one, its mother ten. An anthill and the holes therein) [Lamba]

Q. *M'nyumba imodzi amao ali ndi azi ndi ana onse amene ali ndi madazi.* A. *Mwezi ndi nyenyezi* (In one house the mother is bald, and so are all the children. The moon and the stars) [Nyanja]

Q. *Ala naala utunana.* A. *Nittho niipula* (This one and this one love each other. The eye and the nose (they are close together)) [Makua]

Q. *Ndakuliba nebudzi lakawa pakati kwamanhaŋga.* A. *Mŋedzi nenyenyedzi* (I puzzle you with a melon that fell among the pumpkins. The moon and the stars) [Kalanga]

8.3. In a great number of cases the answer consists of a possessive phrase, i.e. a noun+ qualificative, which really is an extended form of type 7.2. above. This also may appear in a copulative construction.

Q. *Akacekulu kalipalawila.* A. *Mbomutondo wabwalwa* (The gnome that boils over itself. A pot of beer) [Lamba]

Q. *Fyonsefi fyanji, ne mwine ncile?* A. *Mbamunsisiŋga kuβuluβa* (All these are mine, I myself go over them. The wasp at the flowers) [Lamba]

Q. *Ndrapala mhina inama βatthe.* A. *Iʃiniŋki yolaku* or *Itthanyaŋgo yolaku* (Skin on the inside, flesh outside. Gizzard of a fowl) [Makua]

Q. *Selô sêsesekang setlhôfala môfatsheng.* A. *Keleoto lamotho* (The thing that is never away from the ground. It is the foot of a person) [Kgatla]

There are many other examples of riddles the answer of which consists of two words. These may be noun with its qualificative, as above, or a subject (noun) and verb, etc.

Q. *Tuɓuri tuβiri tunoramba kuzara; munopinda βanhu, mombe, mbudzi nezvimŋe.* A. *Tuziso tuβiri* (Two little holes that refuse to be filled; there enter people, oxen, goats and other things. Two little eyes) [Zezuru]

Q. *Monse mucalo kali maβeŋga.* A. *Mbemilando munsila* (Throughout the country there are slices. The fallen trees in the path) [Lamba]

Q. *Tihuku takaMuzila tocina hiswisuka matsutsu.* A. *Mbita yavila* (Muzila's hens dance with their tails. The pot is boiling) [Tsonga]

Q. *Tamba, ndakwira.* A. *Tsaiya iri kuβira* (Play, I have climbed up. A pot on the boil) [Zezuru]

Q. *Mvura cena.* A. *Dada jena* (Clear water. A white duck) [Zezuru]

8.4. Some cases have been found where the answer consists of one word followed by an explanatory sentence, which can almost be considered as parenthetical, and given to explain a somewhat obscure answer.

Q. *Wonse βaisala, βuliciti bwasyala.* A. *Mbecinu, tacisala-po* (All have closed, the stamping has remained. The pestle-mortar, it does not close up) [Lamba]

Q. *Akaŋanda mbuluβulu?* A. *Mbesana; lilipo nemulyaŋgo?* (A little house absolutely entire. An egg; has it any door?) [Lamba]

Q. *Umusitu peulu, umuloŋga pansi?* A. *Mbemfuko, pakuti ubwina pansi, amafuki peulu.* (A swamp-forest above, the stream beneath. A mole, for his tunnel is beneath, the mole-hill above) [Lamba]

Q. *Ndapha nyama, pamene ndasenda ndatenga cikopa ndataya; Ndatenga matumba ndataya, ndipo ndadya minofu yokha.* A. *Papaya: Sitidya kungu ndi nthanga* (I have killed game, when I have skinned it, I have taken the skin and I have thrown it away; I have taken the entrails and thrown them away, and I have eaten only the flesh. Pawpaw: we do not eat the skin and the seeds) [Nyanja]

8.5. We have seen that with the majority of riddles the answer consists of one word only. With a smaller number it consists of two words, which, however, constitute one semantic unit. But many riddles are to be found which have a whole sentence as answer. These are especially numerous in Tsonga-Ronga, where riddles with a one-word answer are in the minority. In other Bantu Languages such riddles are rarer, and Schapera mentions that none were found in Kgatla.

Q. *Kuringe mbhaha, kukokole nkuku.* A. *Namuntlha kuni ntsuvi yobiha, ayikoti kuxa* (The hen has crowed and the cock has cackled. To-day there is such a bad mist that the sun cannot appear) [Tsonga]

Q. *Lexofa xibohiwile.* A. *Ivele loko ribolela emakhambeni yarona* (The thing which is dead while still clinging (to the stem). A cob of mealies rotten while still in its leaves on the stem) [Tsonga]

Q. *Motu abomi nyama, motu akomi na nsima, nyama akomi liboso.* A. *Ntina lokola: okei kokata mbila, mbila ekokwa liboso na mabele, yo na nsima* (A person kills an animal, the person arrives after, the animal before. I answer: A person cuts a palm-fruit cluster, it falls down before, he afterwards) [Lingala]

The answer, consisting of a whole sentence can even take the form of a question or a negative statement.

Q. *Syu waβatuka βamama.* A. *Mbomukulu wacilile-po iculu ninani?* ("Syu" has reviled my mother. What big man has ever jumped over an anthill?) [Lamba][1]

Q. *Motu moko akonaki bilanga ya pilipili, mpe ye akoliaka pilipili yango te.* A. *Lokola: Soko oboti mwana ya mwasi, yo moto okokwela ye? Te* (A man planted fields of chillies, and himself does not eat those chillies. Answer: If you have a daughter, would you marry her, you a man? No) [Lingala]

Q. *Ndacera msampha wanga kalangali kapita.* A. *Mphepo. Sigwidwa mu msampha* (I have set my trap—the "kalangali" has already gone. The wind is not caught in a trap) [Nyanja]

9. *General Observations*

9.1. Some riddles have several possible answers for the same question.

Q. *Tsheke, tsheke, waku tsheke, hilexiyaa!* A. (i) *Xingwala-ngwandla* or (ii) *Irikarhi.* (Tsheke, tsheke, he said, tsheke, it is yonder there! (i) That which is doing *ngwala-ngwandla* (the thunder), or (ii) A little zebra [pierced by an arrow]) [Tsonga]

Q. *Ici tacikala kulutende?* A. (i) *Mbeŋguni*, or (ii) *Mbenama* (What does not sit on a grass stalk? (i) A honey-guide, or (ii) An animal) [Lamba]

Q. *Cedembo, tamba, ndaβata muswe.* A. (i) *Ɓadza*, or (ii) *Mugoti* (Play, pole-cat, I've got hold of your tail. (i) Hoe, or (ii) Porridge-stirring-stick) [Zezuru]

9.2. Some riddles seem to indicate no similarity of idea between the question and the answer, and only similitude of sound is observable. Usually there is great resemblance between the question and answer as far as the structure of the sentences is concerned, and this adds to the effect of balance and alliteration. Such examples perhaps should be treated under a special category, "the jingle".

Q. *Hikumi nkuhlu, uwupfa-wupfa, kakusala huhlu yin'we.* A. *Hikumi mulungu, awondja-wondja, kakusala ndjepfu yin'we.* (We found a *nkuhlu* which ripens, which ripens; only one nut is found. We found a white man, who gets thinner, who gets thinner; nothing is left but a hair of his beard) [Ronga]

9.3. With many riddles the meaning is obscure and in such cases an explanation of the answer is necessary; in recording riddles, many researchers have failed to record the explanations, considering only the formulae of the answer and of the question. However, among the players of riddle games, the explanation is often given, especially to young children or to persons not initiated in the game. The answers to such obscure riddles are learnt by heart by the people of the community.

Q. *Sejêre mahlaka, seaeba-eba.* A. *'Mamo-langoane—masiba aeôna ahlôôhông* (It carries reeds on its head, it rocks, it rocks. The secretary-bird—its feathers are on its head) [Southern Sotho]

In many cases, however, the riddle is so obscure that no meaning can be attached to it.

Q. *Bekhumbi.* A. *Mayo, kufa* (The people against the wall. Ah! if only I should die) [Ronga]

Part 2: Linguistic Structure

10. Special words or grammatical forms are often found in riddles; a few of them are noted here, but many more no doubt remain to be described.

10.1. Frequent use of ideophones in the riddles, in the "question" part mainly, but occasionally in the answer too, has been noted.

Q. *Tsheke, tsheke, 'kotlo'!* A. *Infenhe* (Tsheke, tsheke, it hides itself! It is the baboon) [Tsonga]

[1] "Herein is a reference to a peculiar custom. Supposing A is beating B, and B pronounces the name of his own father, A will leave off beating B, lest he should get into trouble with the latter's father, on the grounds of having criminally defamed him." C. M. Doke, *Lamba Folk-lore*, p. 567.

Q. *Ndzihoxile nseve wuya ku 'dzi'.* A. *Ndzicerile timanga tiya ku 'tshoko'* (I have thrown an arrow, it has struck deep. I have dug peanuts, they are plentiful) [Tsonga]

Q. *Xiba 'chuyu'.* A. *Ixidzengwe* (It does *'chuyu'*. It is the jerboa) [Tsonga]

Q. *'Unoku buda'.* A. *Luwajo* (Covering, uncovering. It is the foot) [Mwera]

Q. *Mpolêllê, 'dompi dongkôtswe'!* A. *Ketlhapi* (Tell me *'dompi donkgôtswe'*. It is the fish [plunging in the water]) [Kgatla]

10.2. The subject of the verb of the metaphor, or the subject of reference, is often indicated by a noun in the diminutive, occasionally in the augmentative, although there may be no special reference to a small or big object.

Q. *Akalindi inswaswa pa.* A. *Mbameno* (The little hole full of grass litter. The teeth) [Lamba]

Q. *Kakomana anoridza tapreta.* A. *Rurimi* (The little chap who plays the typewriter. The tongue) [Zezuru]

Q. *Kamba kaŋgu kakasvipa kunze, kukacena pamusuo, kukatsvuka mukati mako.* A. *Huso hutema, mazino macena, mukanwa mutsvukutsvuku.* (My little house is black outside, white at the door, and red within. A black face, white teeth, a red, red mouth) [Zezuru]

Q. *Akanama kakalukwiso'luβilo, pakusaŋge' nsila yakaβyakwe, kakacileko'βukali.* A. *Mbomulilo* (The little animal that comes swiftly, but when it reaches the path of its little mate, it leaves off its fierceness. The fire) [Lamba]

Q. *Ziβako raβaKuzhoko.* A. *Mazino* (The huge cave of Mr Kuzhoko. The teeth) [Zezuru]

Q. *Makomana akapfeka zvipepe gumi zvakafanana.* A. *Nzara neminwe* (The big boys have put on ten caps like one another. The nails and fingers) [Zezuru]

10.3. For the sake of conciseness, words are often compounded in riddles.

Q. *Lendlwini kamamana kupfurha ndzilomungoma.* A. *Lendlwini kamamana valahla munhu wakufa* (In mother's hut, the fire-witchdoctor is burning. In mother's hut, they are burying a dead man) [Tsonga]

Q. *Ndzihlangene nanhwanyana wakaxikosimananga.* A. *Ndzihlangene nanhlalalamananga* (I have met a girl turning her back-on-the-desert [lit. of the nape-desert]. I have met the honey-bird of the desert) [Tsonga]

Q. *Majoê, mabetsa-hôlê.* A. *Mahlô* (The stones, the far-throwers. The eyes) [Southern Sotho]

Q. *Bahlankana ba-kola-tšoêu, baêntsêng mokoloko.* A. *Telegrafi* (The young men with the white head-dresses, who are in a row. Telegraph poles) [Southern Sotho]

10.4. Reduplication of the whole "question" part of the riddle has been noted already. More common, however, is the reduplication of one word only, or part of a word, in the riddle. This serves as a device to indicate diminution, augmentation or intensification; more often it is merely for the sound effect.

Q. *Tinyeleti madzala-dzala.* A. *Vana vamana un'we vadya hikutovana* (The stars are far away from each other. The children of a woman eat and pinch one another) [Tsonga]

Q. *Napite kukajaŋgu boi βala kotimaŋga jika koti koti koti.* A. *Mpuŋga* (I went to my friend's, all of them bending, bending, bending. Rice) [Mwera]

10.5. In a great number of riddles the subject of the action of the metaphor is in the first person singular.

Q. *Kahorwa waanlokwaka kahountthelia icuβe yolipa.* A. *Mtthale* (I went to my friend and a hard piece of sugar-cane was broken for me. Bamboo) [Makua]

Q. *Ndinanto yam ivuza amanzi ngambambo.* A. *Intluzo nxa kuhluzwayo* (I have a thing which oozes water through its ribs. Beer-strainer when straining) [Xhosa]

10.6. In very many riddles there is reference to "my father", "my mother" and other relatives; another word which is often used as

subject in the metaphor is "animal". This is just a conventional usage which does not in fact refer at all to any of the relatives mentioned or to any animal.

Q. *Mwasi na tata akamati libumu na mokongo.* A. *Mpende* (The wife of my father carries her belly on her back. The calf of the leg) [Lingala]

Q. *Bandeko babale bakotambola ndenge yoko.* A. *Makolo* (Two brothers who walk in the same way. The legs) [Lingala]

Q. *M'nyumba yamai alipo munthu waalamba ambiri.* A. *Mtolo wa nzama* (In the house of my mother there is a person of many belts. A bundle of *nzama* beans) [Nyanja]

Q. *Mombe yaɓaɓa waŋgu yawira mudziɓa; ndasara, ndaɓata muswe.* A. *Mukombe muciroŋgo* (My father's ox fell into the pool; I remained and held its tail. The water-ladle in the pot) [Zezuru]

Q. *Nyama yoko enene, ekoliaka mikolo minso pe ekotondakate.* A. *Mabele* (The big animal, it eats always and is not yet full. The earth [swallowing water, corpses, seeds, etc.]) [Lingala]

10.7. In riddles are to be found many archaic words and structures no longer used in everyday speech. These, to be understood by children, have to be explained to them by older playmates or by adults. Riddles are rich in colourful idioms, many of which reflect some aspect of the people's spiritual or material culture.

Q. *Akauɓi kujaŋgala-jaŋgala-pe, aimba citamile-pe mbo mbo mbo.* A. *Litende lyaukana* (Mr Leopard just trotting along, Mr Lion just sits doing nothing. A pot of beer) [Mwera][1]

Q. *Naŋkwakwa kulya likonde mcilo-li mbanda.* A. *Lijela* (A lizard eating the bush, the tail is in a hole. A hoe) [Mwera][2]

Nakene mentions that in Tlokwa such words as *nkekenene* (round), *sedibêlô* (a calabash for fat), *medupi* (rain that falls continually), and many other words which are found in riddles are never used in ordinary speech.[3]

Rhythm of the Riddles

11. Endemann, in his article "Rätsel der Sotho", describes a type of riddle in which the question and the answer, he says, are set in verse, the governing element of which is rhythm based on stress or beat[4].

Q. *Monna êmohubêtswana*
Kamohwêtša adutse.
Ahlôka le-"êšêê morêna".
(A little reddish man,
I found him seated,
He even lacked (to say) "Greetings Sir.")

A. *Yare gokwa kèrialô:*
Ngwana-seolo,
Kele bjang?
(On hearing I say/said:
Child of ant-heap,
I being how?)

This type of riddle does not seem to differ radically from the general type of riddles, except for the way in which the author has set it. Many riddles are found in which rhythm is a salient feature, and they could easily be set in the same form as those mentioned by Endemann. In many, however, the answer would not form verse, as it consists of one or two words only.

11.1. In these riddles where rhythm is a prominent feature, the same types of syllable patterns are observable as in Bantu proverbs[5]. The pattern and resulting balance may be found

[1] Instead of *citamile*, *citemi* could be used. In fact, "in ordinary speech, the form *-temi* is generally employed." L. Harries, "Some Riddles of the Mwera People," p. 32.

[2] "*mcilo-li*, coalescence of final vowel *a* with initial *u* in form with the defective verb, *mcila-uli*. The only example of such coalescence observed." L. Harries, "Some Riddles of the Mwera People," p. 33.

[3] G. Nakene, "Tlokwa Riddles," p. 127.

[4] "Der 'Aufgeber' des Rätsels (*monyeli*) stellt seine Rätselfrage (*nyeli* oder *thai*) in einer vom Rhythmus der Starktöne beherrschten Strophe, und der Löser des Rätsels (*monyeloli*) antwortet in einer Strophe, deren Rhythmus sich dem der Frage anpasst." (p. 55).

[5] See, for example, C.L.S. Nyembezi: *Zulu Proverbs*.

in the "question" part of the riddle, or in the riddle as a whole.

Q. *Inama ikani inociβa ukura, yonnuwaka kinociβa tthotthoni, uβeŋgia.* A. *Ncuwa* (A very small animal which is tasty to eat, when it grows up it is not tasty anymore, it is harmful. The sun) [Makua]. Pattern: [3.3.4.3, 5.4.3.4]

Q. *Xikhatu xatshuri.* A. *Likhula lamandza* (The bottom of the mortar. The large end of the egg) [Tsonga]. Pattern: [3.3., 3.3]

Q. *Lendlwini kamamana kupfurha ndzilo-mungoma.* A. *Lendlwini kamamana valahla munhu wakufa* (In mother's hut, the fire-witchdoctor is burning. In mother's hut, they are burying a dead man) [Tsonga]. Pattern: [3.4.3.2.3, 3.4.3.2.3]

11.2. Such rhythm is achieved by a balanced number of syllables. But often the balance of recurring words, or of words with opposite meaning, or parallelism in the words as regards the parts of speech to which they belong, are factors producing rhythm.

Q. *Swipeni swimbirhi aswiyiveki* [noun, adjective, verb]. A. *Tihosi timbirhi atiluveki* [noun, adjective, verb] (One cannot steal two steenbucks. One does not pay tax to two chiefs) [Tsonga]. Pattern: [3.3.5, 3.3.5]

Q. *Iciseβa mukati, iminefu posonde* [noun, adverb, noun adverb; adverbs opposite in meaning]. A. *Mbetaβa* (Skin within, flesh without. A maize-cob) [Lamba]. Pattern: [4.3, 4.3]

Q. *Oweta kunyaraka oheta, oheta kunyaraka oweta.* A. *Nyoce* (The walker gives birth to the non-walker, the non-walker to the walker. An egg) [Makua]. Pattern: [3.4.3, 3.4.3]

Q. *Mvura cena.* A. *Dada jena* (Clean water. A white duck) [Zezuru]. Pattern: [2.2, 2.2]

Q. *Atende kwenda mwacupi, acupi kwenda mwatende.* A. *Nomelo naciŋwelo* (*Atende* goes into *acupi*, *acupi* goes into *atende*. The ladle and a small calabash) [Mwera]. Pattern: [3.2.3, 3.2.3]

Content of Bantu Riddles

12. From the various examples set in the preceding pages, it can be seen that riddles deal mainly with the material world surrounding the people. In the riddles is described nature as a whole, particularly numerous being the riddles which refer to natural phenomena, and fauna and flora, from insects and grass to trees and elephants. Riddles also commonly describe material objects in the culture of the people.

Being more or less accurate, complete or suggestive descriptions of the world and its phenomena, riddles are a good reflection of the reactions of people to things, or their interest therein. Such things include

(*a*) Natural phenomena, e.g., water, fire, lightning, thunder, etc.;

(*b*) Animals, plants, and occupations related to these;

(*c*) Their own bodies, which have retained the people's attention, and given rise to numerous riddles.

In addition to these, many riddles contain precise references to the way of life of the people, and aspects of their abstract culture.

12.1. Some riddles refer to some customs, and only a knowledge of the customs of the people enables one to understand and solve the riddle.

Q. *Kapaya wakifwile, umusowa kosyala mumuβa?* A. *Mba pakufwe'nseβula, βalafunde' ciseβa, nekufukutilako umuβa* (The puku ram died, the cry remained in the bellows. When a puku dies, they skin it, and use it to blow the bellows with) [Lamba]

Q. *Fiêla-fiêla, Nkoko atsoalê.* A. *Litaola* (*liafiêlloa*) (Sweep, sweep, so that Nkoko should bring forth his children. The divining bones (one cleans [a patch on the ground] for them, i.e. before they are cast)) [Southern Sotho]

Q. *Mvana natu dzakatarisana.* A. *Mapfiwa* (Three women who have borne a child facing each other. Hearth-stones [*Mvana*, a woman who has borne a child. Children are born when a family is set up. Only married women have hearth-stones]) [Karanga]

See also last riddle of paragraph 11.2.

12.2. Many riddles refer to the habits of the people in their daily life, or picture (often with much humour) their faults and reactions.

Q. *Mpolêllê, ditshipa tsêpêdi tsêekare gê dilwa tsaseka tsakgaoganngwa.* A. *Kebanyadi* (Tell me, two genet cats which when they fight should not be separated. It is a married couple) [Kgatla]

Q. *Daidza amai, hosha yakura.* A. *Hari iri kuβira* (Call mother, the fever has gone. A pot on the boil) [Kalanga]

Q. *Ndakuliba ndaŋkonde kutonaka.* A. *Hazvadzi* (I puzzle you with a *mukonde* tree [in] being just pretty. The sister—however pretty she may be, one cannot marry her) [Kalanga]

Q. *Twana tutema twakaita muduŋgwe.* A. *Hari parukuβa* (The little black children have formed a line. Pots on the shelf) [Zezuru]

Q. *M! m! m! m!* A. *Mbomukulu pakuteŋga* (Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! An adult when he grumbles) [Lamba]

12.3. Occasionally one finds a riddle which expresses some profound human truth, e.g.

Q. *Icitoŋkala mumasala.* A. *Mbomutima* (That which digs about in the deserted village. The heart—which always turns to think of the past) [Lamba]

12.4. Riddles often reveal the artistic sense of the people. Examples have already been noted where rhythm, or balance of words and concepts, is an important factor. The richness of the metaphors found in riddles to describe various circumstances of life and the contents of the universe is in itself a reflection of the lively imagination, acute observation and artistic sense of the people.

Q. *Ezalaki motu moko na mboka na biso, lokola na Leo II, soko bazali kobola mbonda na ye kuna na Leo I, azali kobina na mboka.* A. *Lokola: mopepe na bula ezali musika, matiti ezali motu akobina* (There was a man in our village, let us suppose that it is Leo II, who, as people were beating his drum over there at Leo I, was dancing in the village. Answer: The wind and the rain are the music, the grass is the man who dances) [Leo I and Leo II are parts of Leopoldville, Leo II being further than Leo I] [Lingala]

Q. *Vakomana voku bvidza kuruka sero.* A. *Nyuchi* (Boys who know how to make winnowing-baskets. Bees [The holes in the honeycomb are likened to the plaiting of the winnowing-basket. Bees are small, so are boys]) [Karanga]

Q. *Cinhu caŋgu cakatsvuka pasi, cakasvipa pakati, cakacena pamusoro.* A. *Moto mutsvukupasi, harì nhema pakati, sadza rejena pamusoro* (My thing is red below, black in the middle, and white on top. Red fire beneath, black pot between, white porridge on top) [Zezuru]

12.5. Many riddles exhibit highly poetical forms, but many others by their realism would surprise or shock any person lacking a sense of humour. Some cannot be recorded here because of their vividness of imagery, but here are a few which show that the people retain their sense of observation in any circumstance.

Q. *Khadi ya sigwemugwemu.* A. *U dya ngutu nyadiso-wee* (A pot breaking on all sides. A man eating more than his fill) [Chopi]

Q. *Intxini lexi loko bahlota xone, batakala khume dzatinhonga, kambe kuyadlaya tibiri?* A. *Inhwala* (What is the thing which you hunt with ten sticks, and which you use only two sticks to kill? A louse) [Ronga]

Q. *Mombe yaβaβa waŋgu inoura yirwa paruware.* A. *Inda* (My father's ox is killed on the flat rock [i.e. thumb-nail]. A louse) [Zezuru]

Q. *Iyopwe yaamwene kimalia utinta.* A. *Mamila* (The cooking pot of the chief never finishes being scooped out of. Nasal mucus) [Makua]

12.6. Riddles, like other aspects of Bantu culture, have been affected by foreign influences, mainly European. This is seen in the use of foreign words, or when the riddle itself describes some object or custom which is typically European in origin. Images or words of foreign origin are also used in riddles which otherwise seem to be quite old, and certainly are typically Bantu in underlying significance.

Q. *Mpolêllê, monna yôoapêreng ferofero baki.* A. *Kekhudu* (Tell me, the man who wears a multi-coloured jacket. It is a tortoise) [Kgatla]

Q. *Mpolêllê, phôlôgôlô êeareng gê egôtlhôla entshe dijô kaserota.* A. *Ke'plane'* (Tell me, the animal which when it coughs sends out food through the hump. It is the carpenter's plane) [Kgatla]

Q. *Matombo aɓaɓa waygu, mamɲe anama ɓuri, mamɲe haana.* A. *Makoɓiri* (Some of my father's rocks have holes, some have not. Pennies [Pennies in Southern Rhodesia coinage now have holes in the centre; previous issues did not have holes]) [Zezuru]

12.7. Many riddles have a close resemblance to proverbs, or in a particular language, can even be related to a particular proverb, which proverb constitutes either the answer or the question. Occasionally too, riddles can be related to folktales.

Q. *Bilanga nsambo, ngombe mafuta: Mokoba na mwasi wa mokonzi* [proverb]. A. *Ntina lokola: Oliaka okobanzaka* (The fat cows last only seven years, the gardener will one day marry the wife of the chief [Lit. Seven years, fat ox; the gardener with the wife of the chief]. The meaning is thus: Think when you eat) [Lingala]

Q. *Ntangu ekoleka mikolo minso* [proverb]. *Lokola: Bana bakokoma bakolo* (Time passes by every day. Answer: The children will become adults) [Lingala]

Q. *Batu boni bakozalaka na mokili?* [proverb]. A. *Batu babale, mobali na mwasi* [proverb] (How many people live in the country? Two, a man and a woman [i.e. All men are alike, when one knows one, one knows them all; all woman are alike, but a man is not like a woman]) [Lingala]

Q. *Munsinwa mumukalo.* A. *Mbakantanta* (The one who drinks not in the well. The sable bull) [Lamba]. Compare the proverb: *Munsinwa mumukalo, amasengo alamutaβa* (Mr I-don't-drink-in-a-well, his horns get in the way [this is the name given to the sable antelope])

Q. *Ndakabva kare ndichitswaka muti womwana, ndikamushayiwa.* A. *Pfupa reswoswe* (I have long sought medicine for the child, but I could not find it. The bone of an ant [Based on the fable in which a man was told by a doctor that the bone of an ant would save his sick child]) [Karanga]

The Classification of Bantu Riddles

13. Doke, in his *Lamba Folk-lore*, classifies Lamba riddles in alphabetical order, the first word of the question serving as the basis for this classification. Smith and Dale do not seem to have any system of classification for the Ila riddles they have included in their book *The Ila-speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia.*

H. A. Junod, in his short section on riddles in *The Life of a South African Tribe* classifies riddles according to whether the answer to the riddle is easily understandable and logical, or to whether the answer is obscure. This classification is inconsistent and arbitrary. He mentions that there are two main types of riddles in Tsonga-Ronga, those with an answer containing one word only, and those whose answer is a whole sentence. This last distinction was chosen by Junod and Jaques as the basis of classification for their riddles in *Vutlhari bya Vatonga.*[1]

[1]This book contains a collection of Tsonga and Ronga proverbs and riddles with their English translation.

13.1. The most generally adopted method of classification of Bantu riddles is according to the content of the answer. Schapera, for example, for the Kgatla riddles, adopts the following classification: (*a*) Natural phenomena, (*b*) The vegetable world, (*c*) The animal world (with further subdivisions), (*d*) Crops and other foods, (*e*) The human body, (*f*) Domestic life, (*g*) Utensils and other objects, (*h*) The white man's culture. Fortune, Gray, Harries, and Comhaire-Sylvain adopt a similar method of classification, with minor variations. This is certainly the most satisfactory classification yet devised, as it permits quick reference. Any large collection of riddles should be accompanied by an index.

The Song-riddle

14. The song-riddles, as described by Harries in his article "Makua Song-riddles from the Initiation Rites", do not seem to differ very much from ordinary riddles, except for their use and function, i.e. (*a*) "they are action-songs accompanying a dance", and (*b*) "they have a didactic purpose" (p. 27).

The meanings of these riddles are usually obscure, and the children learn their significance during the rites. Some riddles, however, are not explained to them at all. The riddles are restricted to initiated persons, and must not be revealed to uninitiated persons or to women (or a woman must not reveal them to a man). "Some of these riddles contain the ritual name of the object indicated in the solution. This ritual name is really the child-name, the name assigned to the object as belonging to the state before the initiation . . . We must not understand from this that the child-name was actually used by the children before their initiation. They are told the ritual name for the first time in the rites, and told never to use it again. . . ." (p. 27).

Q. *Akwile pirupelo, anotthatthua nikala.* A. *Woβa* (It is the dead who lie, he starts at a piece of charcoal. Fear). Explanation: *Mtu apacerie ulumia inoa, kankufya utthatthua kila nihuku. Cowopiha cinci cihokala βelaponi βa, mweteke wowoβetu.* (When a person has begun to be bitten (perhaps by) a snake, he doesn't fail to be startled every day. There are many dangerous things here on earth, walk with fear then).

Q. *Ndrindima, ndrindima.* A. *Ukukuta* (Rumble, rumble. The sound of thunder). Explanation: *Kalai akala mwanati ncina nawe Nandrindima, winelia wawe panetania Ukukuta* (Long ago there was an uninitiated girl whose name was Nandrindima, and her initiation rites were called *Ukukuta* [They took place at the end of the dry season when the sound of thunder was in the air. It would be taboo for an uninitiated person to use the ideophone *ndrindima*, for it is the ritual name for thunder]).

The Problem or Conundrum

15. The question part of a riddle draws a comparison, or describes some part of nature or some object, and from the description given in the comparison, the solution must be found. The whole riddle, even if it has a fairly long "question"-part, is usually relatively short. Another type of "riddle" exists, which is usually much longer in form than the riddles referred to so far, and in which no comparison between objects or situations is drawn. In these longer "riddles", a set of data is presented, and from these data the person must work out the solution to the problem. These have been called *problems* or *conundrums* by students of Bantu folklore.

Few conundrums have been recorded up to the present day, but further investigation may prove that they are not as rare as they seem to be at present. According to Doke[1], Duff Macdonald has referred to conundrums, although he has not given any for Yao or Nyanja[2]; Smith and Dale, in *The Ila-speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* quote three found among the Ila, and Weeks quotes two in *Congo Life and Folklore* (pp. 138 and 224). Two found in Yaunde are

[1]C. M. Doke, "Bantu Wisdom Lore," p. 119.
[2]Duff Macdonald, "Yao and Nyanja Tales," and *Africana, or the Heart of Heathen Africa.*

mentioned by Heepe in *Jaunde-Texte von Karl Atangana und Paul Messi.* Doke has recorded one found in Lamba in "Bantu Wisdom Lore" (p. 119).

15.1. The following example is a conundrum quoted by Smith and Dale (pp. 332f.).

"A man and his wife went to visit their friends. On their return homewards they were accompanied by their respective mothers. On the road, the four were set upon by all manner of horrible creatures—lions, snakes, leopards, etc., etc. They managed to elude them and got to a river.

There they found a canoe, but to their horror it would only hold three people. Their enemies were pressing hard upon their trail. The river was full of crocodiles; they couldn't hope to swim, only three could escape. One must die! Who was it to be?
The man sacrificed his mother-in-law, you say. No! His wife would not allow him. She would not desert her mother, nor he his: the elders would not forsake their children. How did they get out of their difficulty? [The native answer is that they all sat down on the river-bank and died together]."

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INITIATION INTO THE CWEZI SPIRIT POSSESSION CULT IN BUNYORO

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SYNOPSIS

The Nyoro of western Uganda have a cult of spirit possession known as the mbandwa *cult, traditionally centred on the ancient Cwezi hero-gods famed throughout the interlacustrine region, but nowadays associated also with many other spirits, some of quite recent origin. A diviner may attribute illness or other misfortune to the activity of one or more of these* mbandwa *spirits, and if he does so the sufferer will have to undergo an arduous initiation, the object of which is to enable the responsible spirit to communicate its wants through him and at the same time to admit the initiate to* mbandwa *cult membership. This article gives a brief account of the initiation ceremonies, which stress in particular the novice's separation from the world of ordinary uninitiated persons, his involvement in a new set of rights and obligations as a member of the* mbandwa *cult, the cult's exclusiveness and secrecy, and the fact that initiation puts the novice in a condition of grave ritual danger* (mahano), *emergence from which requires the performance of specific ritual acts.*

In this article I give some account of the initiation ceremonies associated with the *mbandwa* spirit possession cult in Bunyoro, Uganda[1]. This cult, of which the *Cwezi* spirits are the traditional objects, is widespread though clandestine in Bunyoro and neighbouring countries at the present day[2]. Apart from a few introductory comments and such "asides" as may be needed to explain the matters discussed, I consider only the mode of entry into the cult group. Such topics as its social significance and the modes of thought which underlie it I leave for consideration at some other time.

One prefatory remark must be made. In Bunyoro the society of *babandwa* (those who *bandwa*, i.e. who are able to induce in themselves possession by *mbandwa* spirits) is a very secret and exclusive one. Further, the cult in all its forms has been rigorously suppressed by Government and missions for many years. In consequence it is not easy for the outsider to obtain information about it, for it is widely believed that anyone who tells its secrets puts himself in danger of being killed by the senior members of the cult-group, who are known to be skilled in evil medicines. Thus, as Cory says (p. 927), the investigator finds himself burdened with some responsibility. It was many months before I began to acquire through long personal friendships and especially through the help of recent Christian converts even my present restricted knowledge of the cult. Only once did I actually witness a possession ceremony, and then my presence manifestly affected the proceedings. Nevertheless I have carefully checked and cross-checked my information, and I believe that as far as it goes it is substantially correct.

Bunyoro is one of the interlacustrine Bantu kingdoms of Uganda. Most of its 110,000 native inhabitants are small peasant cultivators living in scattered settlements throughout the fertile regions of the kingdom. Nyoro are governed,

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[1]I carried out field research in Bunyoro at intervals during the years 1951-1955. It was mostly financed by the Treasury Committee for Studentships in Foreign Languages and Cultures, London, whose support I gratefully acknowledge.

[2]In a recent number of the *American Anthropologist* (Vol. 57, No. 5, October, 1955) H. Cory gave an interesting account of the initiatory rites undergone by candidates for membership of a Tanganyika secret society called the *Buswezi*. The *Buswezi* cult is traditionally associated with the ancient Bunyoro kingdom, some hundreds of miles to the north, and it was Cory's account that stimulated me to publish the present paper. References to Cory in the text are to his article referred to above.

under the British administration, by a hereditary king and a hierarchy of appointed territorial chiefs. There is a system of exogamous totemic clans of which membership is patrilineal. These are not corporate units but it is thought right for agnates to live near to and help one another. Nowadays a man's neighbours normally include many unrelated persons as well as kinsmen and affines. It is believed, however, that in former times agnatic descent formed the basis of sizeable residential groups.

Every such group is said to have had its own head, and to have been associated, through a member of the group who was an accredited spirit medium, with one or other of a number (traditionally nineteen) of Cwezi spirits. These spirits derive from the legendary Bacwezi, a race of people who founded a dynasty in Bunyoro some centuries ago and after ruling for a generation or two vanished mysteriously. They possessed amazing wisdom and skills and left behind them a technique of spirit possession of which they themselves were the subjects. By this means their successors could gain access to the power and knowledge which they embodied. Traditionally the emphasis was on the protection, well-being and, especially, fertility of the lineage group with which a particular Cwezi spirit was associated, but in recent times possession has become increasingly an individual affair. Thus when a person suffers illness or other misfortune the diviners may advise him that his trouble is due to a *mbandwa* spirit, that is, to a member of a class of spiritual beings to which the traditional Cwezi spirits belong. The *mbandwa* responsible need not be the Cwezi spirit traditionally associated with the sufferer's lineage. Indeed nowadays it need not be a Cwezi spirit at all, for many new kinds of *mbandwa* have been introduced since traditional times. In this connection Nyoro speak of "white" or "pure" (*ezera*) *mbandwa* and "black" (*eziragura*) *mbandwa*. We shall meet this familiar association of whiteness with purity and goodness, and blackness with the reverse, again. Illness or misfortune may also be due to the ghost of a person who died bearing some grudge against the sufferer. But, whatever kind of spirit it is, Nyoro culture prescribes a specific remedy. This is that, after the responsible spirit has been identified by the diviners, arrangements be made for the victim (or in certain circumstances somebody representing the victim) to be initiated into the *mbandwa* cult, so that he may be "possessed" by that spirit. When he is thus possessed the spirit may say through him what it requires, for example, sacrifice, the dedication of an animal or the discharge of a neglected obligation. After its requirements have been met it may cease its bad effects. In certain circumstances (for example, if the spirit is the ghost of an unrelated and unimportant person) it may be captured and destroyed. But nothing at all can be done until a lengthy and often expensive process of initiation has been undergone.

Nowadays illness is the most usual reason for initiation. But in the traditional "group" or lineage cult a boy or girl might be selected to become the group's medium (for example, on the death of a former medium) or other grounds. Thus the selection might be made by a diviner, or it might be made in the course of a *mbandwa* ceremony (parts of which may be attended by non-initiates) by one of the mediums present, who approaches the chosen person and sits on his or her lap.[1] Or, on a pattern familiar from other societies, the *mbandwa* spirit may itself make the choice, causing the chosen individual to have strange dreams, to become ill, or to wander about alone in the bush for days on end. It is always stressed that the group medium should be a gentle and well-behaved person (*muculezi*), and initiates to the group of "family" cult are almost always children. But even in such

[1]Formally to sit on another person's lap symbolises in Bunyoro a very close attachment, like that between a mother and her child. What is implied here is that the selected person should, through initiation, become a member of the society of *babandwa*, and so the close intimate of the mediums who are present. Another occasion on which there is a formal sitting on the lap of another is when a bride leaves her parental home and is received into her new one; she sits on the laps of both her parents before leaving, and on the laps of her husband's parents as soon as she reaches his house.

cases illness seems to have been the most usual ground for initiation. Often the tutelary *mbandwa* spirit was neglected until someone in the household became ill. It was then revealed that it was this neglect, perhaps the omission to find a successor to a deceased group medium, which had caused the illness.

But whatever kind of spirit is responsible for the trouble it cannot possess and so express itself through the sufferer until he or she has undergone a formal initiation (*kutendeka*) at the hands of already established mediums. Until this is done the spirit cannot be dealt with or the sufferer's condition ameliorated. This initiation may take several days, and it involves not only the payment of a substantial fee (nowadays sometimes as much as twenty pounds) but also the provision of large quantities of food and beer by the initiate and his family. For the ceremony may be attended not only by a number of *babandwa* but also (except for those parts of it which are secret) by uninitiated relatives and neighbours. No strict time order can be laid down for the performance of the various rites, and in a particular initiation some might be omitted. Nor is the ceremony required to occupy a specific number of days, though three or four seem to be usual.

After diagnosis the patient, or a parent if the sufferer is a small child, seeks a senior *mubandwa* (a practitioner of the *mbandwa* cult) or *musegu*, who is known to be a medium for the particular spirit or spirits diagnosed. These senior *babandwa* are much feared and respected. The *musegu* chooses three or four assistants who are also initiated mediums: nowadays most *babandwa* are mediums for several different spirits. These persons may be either men or women; in either case the initiate will call them by kinship terms, thus all may be "mothers", regardless of their sex, and the senior officiant may be called *nyinenkuru*, "great" mother or grandmother. According to some accounts, however, a senior male *mubandwa* may be selected as "father" a senior female as "mother", for purposes of the rites, a usage which would resemble that recorded by Cory (p. 928). The initiate or his representative arranges the date of the ceremony with these people, and makes an initial payment (called *rwiho*) of a shilling or so to each of them. He then goes home to begin preparations for a feast.

Like other persons of high ritual status in Bunyoro (for example the king) *babandwa* may eat only certain kinds of food. Finger-millet (*buro*), the traditional staple of Bunyoro, is cooked for them, and they may eat meat and drink beer. If they are *babandwa* for the traditional Cwezi spirits they may eat only "white" food which includes, as well as those mentioned, *mugobe* (a small plant of which the leaves and seeds are eaten as a relish) sesame and *bunyansoro*, a white edible fungus. Nyoro are well aware of the symbolism involved; *babandwa* eat "white" food, I was told, because "they have come to make white [purify] the house and to give it blessing."[1]

On the appointed day the party of initiators arrives at the house at dusk, probably accompanied by other *babandwa* from nearby. Like Cory's Baswezi they wear ceremonial dress—or at least they would do so were it not that so overt a display of their intentions would put them in danger of arrest; now they don their regalia after they arrive. These include bark-cloth, formerly the dress of all Nyoro but now only worn on ceremonial occasions; beaded head-dresses decorated with cowry shells and sometimes with the black and white fur of the colobus monkey; necklaces made of cowries, beads, seeds and various charms (mostly small pieces of certain species of wood); and wooden staffs of various shapes. These various paraphernalia differ in type and pattern with the kind of *mbandwa* spirits mediated by their owners. I can testify that they make their wearers look very weird and fearsome, quite different from any human being likely to be encountered in ordinary life. An essential part of every *mubandwa*'s equipment is a *nyege*, a pear-shaped rattle made from a gourd, which has been dried and into which have been inserted some of the

[1] *Baizire okweza enju egi nokugiha omugisa.*

hard seeds of the wild lily (*maranga*). Here as elsewhere, however, contact with Western culture has brought changes, and I have seen a *nyege* made out of an empty and battered beer-can.

The first thing the *babandwa* do after they arrive is to wash and purify the initiate. He or she (as most of my informants were women, it will be convenient from now on to suppose that the initiate is female) is taken outside the house and required to undress. Her whole body is then anointed with medicine from head to foot. This anointing is supposed to be done nine times; nine is an auspicious number in many contexts of Nyoro culture. Then the potsherd which contained the medicine is put on the ground, and a black colocynth berry (*ngusuru*) is placed in it. The initiate is told to raise her left foot and to trample on these things, saying as she does so: "May all the badness which was in me depart from me; I have trodden this under with my left foot and so shall I tread on evil in future"[1]. The emphasis here is on the fact that it is a good thing to be a *mubandwa*, an intermediary between men and spirits, and to prepare oneself to be one a person must put away all the evil (*bibi*) that is in him. It is the renunciation of *moral* evil that is implied; we have already referred to the necessity for an initiate to the cult to be of good character.

After this ceremonial purification the initiate is brought back into the house and clothed in a barkcloth. The party sits down near the hearth, where there is a fire made of a wood (*ngando*) which burns with a particularly bright flame. The house has been prepared for the seances which are to follow by spreading on the floor sweet-smelling grasses and herbs—*tete* (lemon grass), *rwihura* (a species of yam) and *rweza* (a small herb with a pretty white blossom, perhaps a *celosia*). After they sit down, the initiators may apply more medicines to the novice's body, and they may blow tobacco smoke over her from their clay pipes, which are sometimes of special design. She is given a branch of a special plant to hold before her in her two hands. This plant, called *muramura*, is a species of *dracaena*, a quick-growing evergreen shrub with closely growing, long, narrow dark green leaves. It is associated throughout the interlacustrine area with the *mbandwa* cult.

Then the first seance begins. The initiate sits near the fire, surrounded by *babandwa*, probably with her head quite covered by the barkcloth she is wearing. Uninitiated relatives and friends may also be present. Songs are sung, accompanied by the rhythmic shaking of the medium's gourd rattles. Formerly a quick rhythm would have been beaten on the small *ntimba* drums, but these are not now used as they could be heard a long distance away. The words of most of the songs, some of which are appropriate to individual *mbandwa* spirits, are familiar to all, and everyone present joins in the singing and choruses. Here are very rough translations of the words of three typical songs: "In order to know that you have really made a blood pact (*kunywana*) you should be sure to make it with a very rich person"[2]; "You get plenty to eat [in the society of *babandwa*] and as well as that you put your hands in other people's purses"[3]; and "Wherever I am called and wherever my wanderings take me, whether by day or by night, I find beautiful young girls prepared for me[4]"! What all these songs suggest is that entry into the cult of the particular spirit being invoked will be rewarding for the novice; the significance of the last song will become plain later in this account. All these songs are repetitive, and are commonly interspersed by choruses, of which a common one is: "Eee! how happy you are when you *bandwa*!" (*Eee! osemire nobandwa!*).

I do not intend in the present context to describe an actual possession in detail. But it is worth noting that the loud and rhythmic rattling of the gourds close to the initiate's head, continued for hours, and combined with the singing and the close atmosphere, may sometimes induce a state of dissociation in which

[1] *Ebibi byona ebibaire bindoho bindugeho, mbirubatire nokuguru kwemoso ndabirubatiraga.*
[2] *Kumanya onywaine onywana na kihagagya.*
[3] *Ogikwatisa eriino omukono otaire omunjobya.*
[4] *Obuntahwa emizongoioko obuntahwa emigendakiro nkasanga engeye nemondo* (or *entulege*) *bansangire.*

the symptoms of possession are exhibited. However, in the cases of which detailed accounts were given to me this did not happen. According to all my informants, after some hours had passed without the initiate evincing any signs of possession the *babandwa* present began to sing songs criticising her, thereby showing that they were becoming impatient. One such song may be roughly translated: "She has a stupid expression like a goat which is about to be caught by a leopard?"[1] Finally a formal pretext is found to take the novice outside the house. The *babandwa* suggest that they should go out to cut some dry standing wood (*murangara*) for the fire—what is implied is that the initiate is stiff and unyielding like dried wood. They accordingly leave the house, taking the initiate with them and saying "Let us go and hunt the *mucwezi*". When they are some distance from the house they stop and the initiate is subjected to some such interrogation as the following (I translate an informant's actual words):

Initiators: "When we were singing did you not feel the *mbandwa* rising into your chest or perhaps your head?"

Novice: "No, I felt no *mbandwa* at all".

Initiators: "When you go to read (that is, to school or pre-baptism class) do they not teach you little by little?"

Novice: "They did not teach me things of this kind."

Initiators: "When you stand up in church to be baptised and to receive a Christian name do you suddenly feel overcome (literally 'nearly die')?"

Novice: "No."

Initiators: "Since you were born have you ever seen a person die and then come back to life again?"

Novice: "No."

Initiators: "When you dress up and go to a dance does somebody come and seize you by the back and say 'this is how you should move it'?"

Novice: "No."

This catechism is of interest (especially the comparison with baptism; informants often elaborated the analogy between the *mbandwa* cult and Christianity in considerable detail) because its intention is evidently to suggest to the initiate that *babandwa* may really "see" even when they appear to be possessed, and that its techniques are not to be learnt all at once. Even though the initiate does not experience possession to begin with she should simulate it, as others do. "You have been annoying us for a long time", the mediums may say to her, "as soon as we go back to the house and start singing again you must begin to shake the branch of *muramura* you are holding. Do it just a little bit at first, but as the singing becomes faster and louder shake it more violently, so that people may say that the *mucwezi* has come".

They return to the house and the seance continues. The novice does as she has been told. When she is shaking her wand strongly, her head still covered by her barkcloth, the *babandwa* press in upon her, and if she does not fall forward herself they push her down. This is a sign that the spirit has entered into her, and everybody is pleased. The *babandwa* express their satisfaction by making characteristic grunting noises (*kubuka*), "like baboons", as an informant aptly put it. The novice now lies prostrate on the floor under her barkcloth. Then the initiators may bind her body with swathes of grass as a corpse is bound before burial (four swathes for a man, three for a woman).

The chief initiator (the *nyinenkuru* or *musegu*) now demands a payment of a shilling or two from the initiate's relatives for "raising her up". The *mbandwa* spirit which has been invoked is supposed now to be in her head, and from now on it, not she, will be addressed. The *babandwa* loosen her grass bonds (if she has been bound) and raise her, and she is again seated near the fire, which is burning brightly. In raising her they take care that she does not touch the floor with the palms of her hands. Another occasion on which a woman rising from the floor is not

[1] *Amaiso koikoi nkembuzi ekukwatwa engo habanzirwe empurubaire.*

permitted to touch the floor with her hands is when a suitor comes to her home with the initial gift of beer and a goat when a marriage is being arranged. Nyoro themselves stress the analogy between initiation into the *mbandwa* cult and marriage.

At this stage in the ceremonies the *mbandwa* spirit may be spoken to by a relative of the initiate, and asked to cease its injurious behaviour and, perhaps, to say what it wants. If it replies it will do so through the initiate in a voice and accent appropriate to the particular spirit which has been invoked. It will also use a special *mbandwa* vocabulary, about which more is said below. A novice would, however, be unlikely to reply at this point. Here is a translation of the prayer which a mother addressed to a *mbandwa* spirit which had possessed her daughter, the initiate: "Now I have drawn you out of the spirit world (*kuzimu*) because you have been injuring my child and making her sick almost to death. Now that I have brought you outside let my child recover, let her grow strong and bear children. I consulted the diviners and they told me that it was you who were preventing her from having children, now let her bear them. They said it was you, *mbandwa*, so now please spit on the stomach of this wife of yours whom you love" (i.e. the initiate).[1] The initiate then spat in her own hands and rubbed them on her stomach. Blessing (*mugisa*) is traditionally conveyed in Bunyoro by spitting into the cupped hands of the recipient of the blessing, who then rubs the saliva on his head, face and chest.

Nowadays an initiate's misfortune would often be attributed by the diviners to several different *mbandwa*, so after the first possession the rattling and singing would recommence and one or more other spirits would be raised into the head of the novice. This might continue far into the night. At dawn the *babandwa* take the initiate outside so that the *mbandwa* may "savour the dawn" (*kusoma emambya*). The male initiators point their spears towards the east and the women point their wooden stirring spoons (*miiko*) in the same direction. The initiate is told to extend her branch of *muramura* likewise. They then do the same in the direction of the other three points of the compass.

After this, at about seven in the morning, another meal of the stiff millet porridge (*buro*), the Nyoro traditional food, is prepared. The *mbandwa* have now left the head of the initiate and of any other *babandwa* who have been possessed during the night. While they eat, the initiators mould the porridge with their fingers into small pellets and they put these morsels into the initiate's mouth, just as a mother would do for her small child. This way of feeding another person is called *kubegera* in Nyoro, and its practice signifies a very close attachment. It also features in the ceremony of making a blood pact (*kunywana*). The mediums spit in the morsels before putting them in the initiate's mouth; thus they convey to her the blessings of their respective *mbandwa* spirits.

The rest of this day may be spent by the initiators in making the appropriate cult paraphernalia for the new initiate. These include, as well as the head-dresses mentioned earlier, certain ritual objects called *kalinda* or *bijwenge*. These are as a rule cylindrically shaped packages about eight to ten inches long which are sewn up in barkcloth and are usually decorated on the outside with cowry shells, beads and (nowadays) small coins. The number and pattern of these decorations vary according to the particular *mbandwa* with which the artefact is associated, and it invariably contains a number of potent medicines. These may include various kinds of grass and other plants associated with the cult, and they always include certain of the initiate's *exuviae*, in particular blood, hair from the head, armpits and *pudenda*, eyelashes, nail-parings from hands and feet, and scrapings from the skin. Small fragments torn from the barkcloth worn by the initiate may also be included. There

[1] *Hati nkuikire kuzimu obaire norurumira omwana wange nomurwaza okumwita. Hati nkutaire aheru, omwana wange akire, ayomerre, azale, nkaraguza abafumu bangamba nti wakamutangire kuzara. Hati azale. Bagambe ngu niwe mbandwa kandi ocwe handa yomukazi wawe ogu ouwaligire.*

may also be small pellets of millet porridge as well as coffee beans and a mixture of sesame and millet grains which the initiate has chewed and spat out. The charm thus manufactured is believed to be extremely powerful, for it contains dangerous medicines some of which are of kinds employed in certain types of sorcery. It can cause its owner to have dreams in which the *mbandwa* spirit concerned may communicate its wishes to the dreamer, and it may make its possessor sick or even kill her, if she neglects her *mbandwa* or if she does not behave with proper respect to older members of the cult.

After the initiate's regalia have been made, the main payment, perhaps several hundred shillings, may be asked for. This will be shared between the principal initiator and his assistants. This payment is sometimes referred to as the *mbandwa*'s bridewealth (*mukago gw'embandwa*). We shall refer again to the analogy Nyoro draw between initiation and marriage: as a man takes a wife to serve him, so the *mbandwa* spirit receives a new medium to serve it and satisfy its needs.

On the second night there is further singing and spirits may again be raised into the heads of the initiate and the *babandwa* who are present. Next morning there may take place the ceremony of being born (*kuzarwa*). Only members of the cult may attend. Grass is spread on the floor of an inner room of the house, and one of the *babandwa*, usually an old woman who has been chosen to be the "mother", stands with her legs apart, while the initiate lies down on the ground behind her. Then another *mubandwa* who has been chosen to be the midwife seizes the initiate from the front and helped by the others she pulls her forward head first between the legs of the "mother", who groans realistically like a woman in labour. This is how an informant described what happens: "When I had been pulled through my 'mother's' legs I did not cry as a newborn baby should. So they said 'why is the child not not crying? Is it dead?' They brought a hoe and tapped me with it on the mouth, saying that I should begin to cry. I did so. Then they poured a little water on me, and lifted me up so that I should sit on my 'mother's' lap and take her breast. I just put my mouth to her nipple" This rite is evidently similar in intention (though the pantomime seems to be carried out in more detail) to the *kubwagala* rite described by Cory (pp. 928-29).

After the ritual birth the "mother" formally "curses" (*kukyena*) the initiate, and immediately afterwards she withdraws the curse. This used always to be done when a child was born; it was believed that it made the child less susceptible to cursing by other people afterwards, and so afforded a kind of ritual prophylaxis. The curse administered to a female informant was in the following terms: "When you are giving birth the placenta will break off in the womb, you will be struck by lightning, you will waste away among thorns, you will fall (i.e. be a failure) among women".[1] In the withdrawal of the curse all these unhappy prognostications are negated.

That evening or the next morning (it may be on the second or the third day, there is no fixed timetable) there takes place the first of two excursions into the bush, that is, into the uncultivated grassland and thicket some distance away from the homestead. This first excursion is referred to as going into the "black" bush (*kisaka ekiragura*). We have already referred to the association between whiteness and goodness, blackness and evil and danger, which is here exemplified again. Only initiated persons may accompany the novice to the "black" bush. When they reach the chosen place the initiate is made to sit down, supported from behind by one of her "mothers", with her legs stretched out and wide apart. In front of her the various regalia which the initiators made earlier, together with their own regalia, are placed in a heap, and in the middle the initiator's spears are thrust blade upwards into the ground. Then the following things are done, though not necessarily in any particular order. First the senior *mubandwa* present (the *musegu*) submits the initiate to a further and much severer formal threat or curse. Dressed only in a loincloth, he stands in front of the seated novice with his back towards her. He

[1] *Okacwekerwe enkono omunda nozara, katerwe enkuba, kakondekonderwe mumahwa, okagwe omubakazi.*

bends forward, thrusting his buttocks at the novice's face (to expose oneself in this way—*kukunama*—is ordinarily regarded as most indecent) and holding his gourd rattle in both hands he passes it between his legs from the front and touches her on the mouth with it. He then speaks somewhat as follows (this is a translation of a text given to me by a female informant): "Now I have initiated you. I am a *musegu* of very long ago; I began in the time of Nyabongo [a long dead king]. If you ever tell anybody that *babandwa* really "see" [that is, that they are not necessarily really possessed but may be simulating possession] the ground will open and swallow you up, you will be struck by lightning when there is no rain, you will be bitten by a cobra or perhaps a python, you will be pierced by thorns, if you go into the bush you will never come out of it alive, and when you lie with men you will 'spoil' it by breaking wind".[1] After cursing the initiate in these terms the *musegu* stands up and hurls his gourd rattle over her head into the grass behind her.

The *musegu* then takes a small pebble which has been wrapped up in a piece of banana leaf (as food is wrapped up) and puts it in the initiate's mouth saying "swallow this medicine". The initiate attempts to do so but fails. The pebble is then thrown away.

There follows a rite the effect of which is still further to terrify the novice and to emphasize the deadly seriousness of the occasion. Here is an informant's account of it. "The *musegu* withdrew his spear from the ground in front of me and told the 'mother' who was supporting me to hold me firmly so that he might kill me. My 'mother' did as she was told; she uncovered my chest, and tapping my breast-bone with her finger she said to the *musegu* 'I have prepared her properly, here is her breast-bone, pierce her there'. The *musegu* stepped back a few paces and then rushed right at me with his spear poised to kill me. But he stopped at the last moment and said 'Eh! I have a bad grip of the spear!' He did this twice; on the third occasion he brought the point of the spear right up to my chest as though he were really going to pierce me, but he did not. I wept. When they (i.e. the *musegu* and the other *babandwa* present) saw that I was weeping they cheered loudly and grunted. They said 'Now she has taken hold of (literally "caught") the secrets of the *babandwa*; others have undergone the same experience, now she will become a *mubandwa* like other *babandwa*'."

The novice is then told to select from the heap of regalia which was placed before her the ones which she likes best. The intention is that she should choose those which were made for her the previous day, and if she chooses wrongly she is slapped and beaten. Usually she has been told beforehand what hers look like, so she selects the right ones. When she does so the initiators are pleased and praise her saying "this child has pleased her *mbandwa*, for she has chosen its 'crown' (*kondo*) correctly". They then place the novice's head-dress on her head nine times.

During the visit to the "black" bush, finally, a beginning may be made in instructing the novice in the vocabulary of *mbandwa*. This is not properly speaking a language; the grammar and syntax used are still Nyoro, but many everyday objects and actions are called by names which although Bantu-sounding are not used in other contexts. Some of these words seem to be borrowings from Swahili, others may be derived from neighbouring languages or may even be survivals of obsolete forms. The initiate is told always to use the *mbandwa* vocabulary when she is being possessed; failure to do so would disgrace her. She cannot, however, pick up the whole of the quite extensive vocabulary at one sitting;

[1] *Nkutendekere. Ndi musegu weira naira, nkatandika obwa Nyabongo, obwoligamba ngu babandwa nibarora hali okalire tolirugaho, eryesama elikumira, oliterwa enkuba etali maizi, eriba njoka eyencwera eriba nziramire, erikutema erikwita olicumitwa ekisongoza, ogenzere omukisaka tolirugayo olifa, orasihanaga nabasaija nosisa (nonyampa).* Another form of this "curse" is as follows: "If you speak of what *babandwa* do you will be struck by lightning, you will be bitten by a snake, you will go mad, you will die badly and (your body) will be scattered like ashes, and all the *babandwa* will practise evil magic against you until you die." *(Obwolibaza ebikorwa byembandwa enkuba erikutera, enjoka erikutema, oligwa eirano, olifa kubi nocucuka nkeiju, kandi ababandwa bona balikuharana okuhikya obwolifa)*

she gradually becomes familiar with it in the course of succeeding *mbandwa* sessions.

These, then, are the activities which are associated with the "black" bush. They seem in general to be concerned with testing and instructing the candidate and, in particular, with the need forcibly to impress upon her the power of the *mbandwa* spirits and their mediums, and the necessity to keep their secrets. In the evening the party returns to the house. When they arrive in the courtyard some handfuls of thatch are pulled from the roof over both the front and the back doors of the building. These wisps of dry grass are burnt in the centre of the courtyard, and the white ash which remains is smeared on the novice's face and throat. This third night may be passed in further feasting, singing and mediumistic possessions.

The next morning the initiators and the novice return to the bush, this time the "white" bush (*kisaka ekyera*). On this visit the curse or threat previously administered is withdrawn by the same *musegu* who administered it. He uses his gourd rattle again, but this time he does not stoop down, and he merely touches the novice with it on the head. The various imprecations are now individually withdrawn. Then further instruction and advice are given. The initiate is again warned not to disclose the secrets of the cult, and in particular not to neglect the *mbandwa* spirits whose medium she has just become through initiation. She is told that she should always treat the *babandwa* who were present at her initiation with special respect; all of them are her "mothers" or her "grandparents", and when she visits them she should sit on their laps and bring them presents, for she is their child. An informant who had been initiated as a young girl said that she had been addressed somewhat as follows: "Wherever you go, *babandwa* are your parents and grandparents. If a *mubandwa* asks you for fire for his pipe you should give it to him [this is a covert reference to sexual intercourse]. If *babandwa* come to your home you must heat water for them to wash in, and if you go with them into the bush you must give them a cloth from your body to sit on, and spread grass for them." In the "white" bush, also, the initiate may be given further tuition in the *mbandwa* vocabulary. She may also be given a skin bag, *nsaho*, to contain the headdresses and other regalia which were prepared for her; these will be the insignia of her new status as a qualified *mubandwa*, and will enable her in due course to initiate others.

That evening, or perhaps the next day, there takes place a ceremony called *kutembya akaswa* roughly "climbing the termite mound". A suitable mound is found, and a hole is made in it. When the fierce "soldier ants" begin to emerge one of them is placed on the novice's tongue. It is a good omen if it bites her and draws blood. Next a small part of her *mbandwa* regalia is placed in the hole. A day or two later it is noted whether the termites have started to eat this; if they have it means that the inititation has been successful and that the novice will in due course initiate others. At the termite mound, finally, there takes place an act of ritual sexual intercourse with the novice, the purpose of which is to bring to an end the condition of grave ritual danger (*mahano*) in which the secret and sometimes fearful activities of the preceding few days have placed her.

The concept denoted by the word *mahano* is one of the most interesting in Nyoro ideology, and invites comparison with apparently similar notions in other cultures. Here we note simply that though Nyoro use the word loosely to refer to anything strange or wonderful, its primary reference is to conditions implying magical dangers, such as that proper to the person of the king, and, for ordinary people, such conditions as are brought about by death, or by the birth of twins. Relief from these dangerous ritual states, where it is possible at all, can only be brought about by the performance of the prescribed ritual. A woman informant described her experience at the ant-hill as follows: "When we were at the termite mound the *musegu* said to me: 'Let us go and copulate behind the mound in order to finish off the *mahano* (*tumale amahano*). If I do not finish it off for you, when you lie with an ordinary person (*mulimwoyo*) will

you not die?"[1] In this case I refused because I saw that the man was diseased, but at a subsequent initiation ceremony I lay with another *musegu*, because I had not recovered from my illness and the diviners had told me that the reason I did not get better was because I had not yet ended the *mahano* by copulating with a *musegu*." Another informant wrote: "If the initiate is a man he will go with his 'grandmother' to lie with her so that the *mbandwa* may not cause harm. They will make that man lie with that woman even if she is ninety years old. And if the initiate is a girl she must go with the *musegu* and have intercourse with him even if he is a hundred years old. And even if she is the wife of another man she must do this if she wishes to be initiated into the *mbandwa* cult (*kutendekwa embandwa*)." Cory also refers to ritual intercourse in his account of Sumbwa initiation (p. 936). There it evidently serves a similar purpose (the phrase he quotes, *kumala muziro*, means "to finish what is forbidden" in Nyoro, and presumably in Sumbwa also.) Only one of my informants suggested that intercourse would take place between other people besides the novice and a senior initiator (as seems to have been the case in the Sumbwa rite). After the intercourse is finished, the *musegu* may say to the initiate "if you say what you have seen here you will see me" (*orambona*). The latter phrase is usually understood as implying a threat of sorcery.

The sequence of initiation rites, which has now occupied several days, concludes with the sacrifice of a male goat. The animal is killed in the bush and its blood is smeared on the faces of all who are present. None of the flesh is eaten, which is unusual in Nyoro sacrifices: the meat is just left in the bush. With this, and after the initiate has been once again bathed, shaved and dressed in new barkcloths, the initiation rites are ended and the initiators return to their homes. The new *mubandwa*, who is sometimes referred to, regardless of sex, as a "bride" (*mugole*), is supposed to remain in seclusion for several days. If she is a woman she should come out of the house on the fourth day and plant nearby a bark cloth-tree sapling and a *muramura* (*dracaena*) plant. The analogy with a bride is here marked; a bride also spends her first four days in her husband's home in seclusion, and emerges on the fourth day to plant a token food garden which symbolises her new status as a married woman and a food-provider. If the initiate is a married woman the *musegu* may return on the fourth day to "return the initiate to her husband's bed".[2] If he does not do this, she may never sleep with her husband again. It is said that if her husband forced her to cohabit with him before this was done, all the *mahano* which is in her would seriously affect him and might kill him.

Though this material could no doubt be analysed from many different viewpoints, four connected themes which are emphasized in the rites of which I have now given a somewhat summary account seem to be of particular interest. It may be useful, by way of conclusion, to enumerate these, considering at the same time whether the Sumbwa ritual described by Cory also exhibits them. First, then, the rites stress the fact that *babandwa* are not like ordinary people; initiation sets the novice permanently apart from the uninitiated in so far as possession is concerned, and admits him to a world inaccessible to laymen. He becomes something different from what he was before, and his assumption of what is in some sense a new personality is vividly symbolized in the ritual enactments of death and rebirth which we have described. The same theme of separateness and distinction is expressed in the singular *mbandwa* regalia, in the food restrictions imposed upon *bubandwa*, and in the peculiar vocabulary used by cult members.

Secondly, there is the strong emphasis on secrecy; *mbandwa* secrets must not be told, on pain of formidable penalties. This lesson is pressed home by behaviour calculated to strike fear into the novice's heart, and in particular by a

[1] *Tuli hakaswa omusegu yangamba ati ngu'nyuma kiswa tusihane tumale amahano. Obundaba ntakumazireho amahano omulimwoyo obwalikusihana tolifa?*
[2] *Okumutembya mutende hakitabu kyeiba.*

solemn ritual cursing. Though there is no doubt that this stress on secrecy is a traditional feature of the ceremonies, it seems possible that it has received added emphasis and a wider application since the coming of Europeans, for participation in the cult is now regarded as a crime. Certainly many Nyoro believe that anyone who betrays cult secrets is in danger of being killed by the *basegu* themselves, for they are said to be expert in the use of sorcery and the preparation and administration of poisons.

Thirdly, much stress is laid on what we may call the societal aspect of cult membership. The new obligations which the novice assumes in regard to other *babandwa*, and in particular to those who were associated with her initiation, are constantly emphasized. The assimilation of the situation to the family pattern was symbolized by the use of kinship terms such as "mother", "grandmother", "child". We have noted the analogy which Nyoro draw between initiation and marriage, with its assumption of rights and obligations in a new social milieu, and this analogy is stressed in the rites themselves. It is primarily in the sense implied by these usages that the practitioners of the *mbandwa* cult in Bunyoro may be spoken of as a "society". For they lack any kind of formal internal organization or official hierarchy, and most *babandwa* spend by far the greater part of their time in every-day relations with neighbours and kinsmen who may or may not be *babandwa* also. None the less we have seen that *babandwa* do recognise obligations among themselves which are not extended to outsiders. They do act together, in distinction from non-*babandwa*, in initiation ceremonies and seances, and some of them at least do constitute a separate class of professionals with their own rules, equipment and terminology.

The fourth and final feature which I wish to stress is the belief that initiation, like certain other things, brings about the dangerous ritual condition known as *mahano*. This condition can only be relieved by the performance of a specific ritual act, in this case by act of sexual intercourse. Another situation in traditional Nyoro culture in which release from a condition of *mahano* can only be achieved by this means (or by an act symbolizing it) is after the birth of twins.

Although the cultural idiom is in some respects different, and the emphasis varies from one society to the other, it is of some comparative interest that the Buswezi initiation cycle described by Cory for the Sumbwa also exhibits these four themes. The separateness and exclusiveness of cult members are stressed in Sumbwa as they are in Nyoro ritual by a re-birth ceremony, by food restrictions, by special regalia and by a distinctive vocabulary. There is the same emphasis on secrecy, backed by fearsome ritual sanctions and by a procedure in some degree analogous to the ritual "cursing" which I have described from Bunyoro. Cory's account lays stress on the obligations assumed by initiates to fellow, especially senior, members of their society, but it seems plain, for example, from the undertaking which the initiate gives not to renounce the Baswezi (Cory, p. 934), that loyalty to the group is equally a part of Buswezi teaching. Finally, the notion of ritual danger or impurity which can be removed only by ritual sexual intercourse is evidently also to be found in Sumbwa. It would no doubt be rash in the present state of our knowledge to conjecture when and where these cults originated, but it would seem reasonable to assume, at least, in so far as these two areas are concerned, that they share a common origin. The Sumbwa cult seems to differ from the Nyoro one primarily in having assumed in its new *locus* different idioms and sometimes different emphases. And it may well be (though the theme is too large a one to enter upon here) that the respective complexes play broadly similar parts in the social systems in which they occur.

In the foregoing pages I have deliberately restricted myself to a description of the initiation rites only. I hope to present elsewhere an analysis of the various forms of the cult in Bunyoro and of its traditional and contemporary significance. But it may be worth while to comment briefly on one point of particular interest which Cory raised in his article. He wrote (p. 931) that "it does not appear as though the novice merely

pretends to go through his part. Such a fraud would be bound to be detected if it were often practised, but . . . it is difficult to believe that a regular deception in such an important matter has been carried on for many, many years". I cannot pretend to have solved the mystery of whether possession in Bunyoro is real or assumed. But I have questioned many Nyoro on the point, and those of my informants who were themselves ex-*babandwa* were unanimous in asserting that the supposed state of possession, at least in initiation, is assumed. It must, however, be remembered that this category of informant (and it was by far the largest one) as well as being ex-*babandwa* were practising Christians, many of them of a fundamentalist and revivalist turn of mind, who might be supposed to have an interest in disparaging the practice of a cult which they had now come to regard as a thing of Satan. I myself gained the impression, from the obvious enthusiasm and interest with which these informants (who were mostly men and women in advanced middle age) recounted and—where feasible—illustrated the rites they described, that their accounts were likely to be on the whole accurate. At all events, one informant told me that even before she was initiated she knew that *kubandwa* was deception. "But", she said, "I thought that all the same it would be good for the patient if I did what was required" (she was being initiated on behalf of her small child who was ill). This statement, I think, provides a clue to the attitude of cult-members themselves, and perhaps of the more sophisticated among the uninitiated. They may believe that even though spirits are not, at least not always, actually raised into the heads of mediums when they appear to be so, they none the less exist. Accordingly these spirits may be supposed to be gratified by the attentions they receive through their earthly representatives, and in consideration of these attentions they may withdraw the malign influence they have been exerting. Not all religious rites are to be taken literally, except perhaps by the ignorant. And the traditional *mbandwa* cult was a religious cult: in the words of a Nyoro writer (H. K. Karubanga, 1949, pp. 38-39) "*Kubandwa* was a kind of worship and prayer, a way of thanking God and asking him for things. Men's prayers passed through the *mbandwa* spirits just as today we ask the saints to pass our requests to God our Father." Though this writer's view of his own culture may well be coloured by his religious upbringing (he is a Roman Catholic), he plainly sees in the traditional cult something more than a special magical technique. It may be, then, that for most Nyoro a possession ceremony is still an act of worship, of piety and respect, and this itself may be thought to be sufficient to please and conciliate spirits whose existence few would be prepared to deny.

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POTENTIAL AND PROGRESSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN NORTHERN SOTHO[1]

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SYNOPSIS

The progressive and potential constructions are generally regarded as constructions involving the use of the deficient verb stems sa *and* ka *respectively, or as mono-verbal constructions in which* sa *and* ka *function as verb prefixes. An objective analysis of the situation shows that they are actually changing from deficient verb constructions into mono-verbal constructions. The progressive construction seems to be a contraction of a construction in which the deficient verb stem* sa *was followed by the participial mood, as a result of the loss of the subjectival concord of the complementary verb.*

The potential construction seems to be a contraction of a construction in which the deficient verb stem ka *was followed by the consecutive, as a result of the loss of the subjectival concord of the complementary verb.*

There seems to be no justification for the general view that the potential is a non-indicative mood of the verb. It can be proved that the potential, like the progressive, can appear in a number of moods, including the indicative. For this reason they have to be classed together as similar grammatical phenomena.

The progressive and potential constructions (and other similar constructions) can either be regarded as implications, in which case the definition of this term has to be modified or as secondary aspects of the various moods and tenses of the language.

1. *Introductory*

1.1. In his section on the languages of Africa in the volume *Völkerkunde von Afrika* (1940)[2] Westermann makes the following statement:

> "Die Bantusprachen haben Partikeln, die als (frühere) Verben erkennbar sind: Suaheli *a-ta-ona* er kommt sehen d.h. er wird sehen; *a-me-ona* er beendet sehen: er hat gesehen; *a-ka-ona* er ging sah d.h. und er sah. Die Wörter sind dadurch, dass sie ihren selbständigen Charakter aufgegeben haben und nur durch Vergleichung noch als Verben erkennbar sind, zu Formelementen geworden oder sind auf dem Wege dazu."

This statement formulates the character of the morphemes *sa* and *ka* which are used in Northern Sotho in the formation of progressive and potential constructions respectively.

1.2. The progressive construction is used to denote actions which have occurred before the moment or lapse of time implied by the tense in which the construction appears. In the case of the positive form a continuation of the earlier occurrence is expressed, and in the case of the negative a cessation thereof. The construction appears in all the tenses and moods of the verb except the imperative, and is always characterized by the use of the morpheme *sa*[3], e.g.

re sa mo nyaka (we are still seeking him)
ga ke sa mmôna (I see him no longer)
dimpša di sa tlô le loma[4] (the dogs will still bite you)

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[1]I wish to thank Prof. J. A. Engelbrecht and Mr. H. F. Sentker, of the Department of Bantu Languages of the University of Pretoria, for their kind advice in the preparation of this paper.
[2]Publications will henceforth be referred to only by the name of the author and the date of publication. Full particulars appear in the appendix.
[3]The term "morpheme" is here used for all minimal meaningful elements of language (cf. Nida, 1949). Certain reservations have to be made in the case of *sa* and *ka*, however. Our analysis will prove that they are at the same time monomorphemic units and bimorphemic compounds (cf. par. 2.9.)
[4]Vowels are written phonemically according to the principles laid down by Cole (1949 and 1955) for Tswana.

ga ba sa tlô boa gapê (they will no longer return again)
masogana a tlô ba a sa ithuta (the young men will still be studying)
ba sa dutšê ditulông (they are still sitting on the chairs)
ga ke sa rôbêtše (I am no longer asleep)
bašemane ba bê ba sa gama dikgômo (the boys were still milking the cows)
tatagwê o rata gore re sa mo thuša (his father wants us still to help him)
re tlogilê ra se sa boa gapê (we went off and returned no more again)
nka se sa bapala le lena (I can/may/shall no longer play with you)
ke rata go se sa mo kwa (I want to hear him no more).

In certain cases the progressive construction has acquired an idiomatic significance, e.g.

ke sa ilê (I am still gone: I am on the point of going)
ba bê ba sa tšwa go fihla (they were still coming from to arrive: they had just arrived)

1.3. The potential construction denotes potentiality, i.e. the possibility to participate in an action, effected by instances outside the subject. Hence it is also used to denote permission and condition.[1] We may translate potential constructions with words like *can*, *may*, *should*, etc. Sometimes it is impossible to render its significance accurately in English, in which case we have to use circumlocutions like *be permitted to*, *possibly be*, etc. This construction is characterized by the use of the morpheme *ka*, and occurs in the present and future tenses of all moods except the consecutive and the imperative, e.g.

o ka tloga bjalê (you may leave now)
ba ka se re thušê/ba ka se kê ba re thuša (they can/may not help us)
naa le bôna ba ka tlô ya gaê? (will they also be permitted to go home? Afrikaans: sall hulle ook kan/mag huis-toe gaan?)
dikgômo di bê di ka šala lešakêng (the cattle may/could have stayed in the kraal)
go rata gore le bôna bà ka ya gaê (it wants, i.e. it is desirable that they too can/may go home)
ke rata go ka mmolaya (I want to be permitted to kill him; Afrikaans: ek begeer om hom te kan/mag doodmaak)
ke tlô mo itiya gê nka mo hwêtša (I shall beat him if I should find him)

Cf. also its use in compound predicatives:

gê nka bê ke tsebilê, nka bê ke sa ka ka dira bjalô (if I had known, I would not at all/never have done so)

The potential negative is also used as a future negative, probably because it denotes that an action cannot and therefore will not take place, e.g.

nka se yê/nka se kê ka ya (I can/may/shall not go)

2. *Views regarding the Nature of* sa *and* ka

2.1. The morphemes *sa* and *ka* of Northern Sotho are usually regarded as auxiliary verbs. In the first grammar of the language K. Endemann wrote:

> "Der Potential wird mittelst des Hilfsverbs *ka* gebildet" (1876, p. 72), and "Es sind noch einige besondere Aussageweisen anzuführen, welche hier folgen. Die eine . . . wird mit Hilfe des affirmativen Hilfsverbs *sa* gebildet" (p. 126).

This is also the view of most of the later writers on the language (Beyer, 1920, Franz, Schwellnus, T. Endemann, 1939). It is also generally taught in schools. In Van Zyl's well-known and widely-used *Thika-Polêlô*, we find, for instance, an exercise like the following:

> "Tliša madirinyana á mafokong: na, fo, no, bile, *sa*, *ka*, kile napa, nama." (Bring, i.e. use, these auxiliary verbs in sentences: na, fo, no, bile, *sa*, *ka*, kile napa, nama). (The italics are mine.)

[1] Potentiality must not be confused with ability, i.e. to have in oneself the possibility to participate in an action. Compare e.g., *re kgôna go ngwala* (we can write, i.e. we have the ability and knowledge to write) and *re ka ngwala* (we can/may write, i.e. we are allowed by circumstances outside ourselves to write, regardless of our ability to do so.

2.2. In terms of the modern approach to Bantu linguistic analysis we would no longer call them "auxiliary verbs" but "deficient verb stems". This view implies that *sa* and *ka* are normal verb stems which consist of root morphemes (*s-* and *k-* respectively) and the terminative morpheme *-a*. According to this view, then, progressive and potential constructions have to be written as follows in a conjunctive orthography:

resa monyaka (we are still seeking him)
gakesa mmôna (I see him no longer)
oka tloga bjalê (you may leave now)
baka serethušê (they can/may/will not help us)

2.3. Another more "modern" view is that *sa* and *ka* are prefixal morphemes used before verb stems. (Cole (1955), for example, calls them "formatives" in his grammar of Tswana. According to its general use, the term "formative" is applied only to single morphemes used in the formation of words. This view demands the following grouping of symbols for progressive and potential constructions in a conjunctive orthography:

resamonyaka (we are still seeking him)
gakesammôna (I am no longer seeing him)
okatloga bjalê (you may leave now)
bakaserethušê (they can/may/will not help us)

We may regard this view as the opposite of the afore-mentioned view.

2.4. The view that a linguistic form in a Bantu language is a verb stem and the view that it is a prefixal morpheme would normally be contradictory. The first view implies that such a form is polymorphemic, whereas the second view implies that it is monomorphemic. An analysis of the constructions in which *sa* and *ka* appear leads us to the paradoxical conclusion, however, that both views can be justified. It will therefore be necessary to give the reasons which may be offered for each of these views.

2.5. The reasons which may be offered in support of the view that *sa* is a deficient verb stem are the following:

(1) In most of the dialects of Northern Sotho *sa* is preceded by the morpheme *e-* when used in the participial mood,[1] e.g.

o a sepela le gê a esa lwala (he walks though he is still ill)
ba bê ba esa bolêla (they were still speaking)
ba bolêla ba esa dutšê (they talk whilst still sitting)

From this we may infer that *sa* is a monosyllabic verb stem, since the morpheme *e-* is regularly used with most of the monosyllabic verb stems in the participial mood, e.g.

ba bolêla ba etšwa ntlong (they talk whilst coming from the hut)
ba tlô ba etla (they will be coming)

(2) The negative forms of progressive constructions suggest that the part of the construction following *sa* is not affected by the negation, i.e., the termination of the verb is not changed according to the rule applying to the corresponding simple negatives, e.g.

Indicative Present

(*a*) Simple: *ke* (*a*) *bôna* (I am seeing) > *ga ke bônê*
(*b*) Progressive: *ke sa bôna* (I am still seeing < *ga ke sa bôna*

Indicative Future:

(*a*) Simple: *ke tlô bôna* (I shall see) > (*nka se bône*) (*nka se kê ka bôna*)
(*b*) Progressive: *ke sa tlô bôna* (I shall still see) > *ga ke sa tlô bôna*

Indicative Perfect:

(*a*) Simple: *ke rôbêtše* (I am asleep) > *ga se ka rôbala*[2], *ga se ke bône*, *ga ke a bôna*
(*b*) Progressive: *ke sa rôbêtše* (I am still asleep) > *ga ke sa rôbêtše*

Infinitive:

(*a*) Simple: *go bôna* (to see) > *go se bônê*

[1]This fact is not mentioned in the grammars of Northern Sotho. Examples can be found, however, in almost any book written in the languages. In most cases the morpheme *e-* is written as a separate, e.g., *ba bê ba e sa bolêla*.
[2]The three forms of the perfect negative are partly due to dialectal differences. In modern literary Northern Sotho they are, however, sometimes used in free variation.

(*b*) Progressive: *go sa bôna* (still to see) > *go se sa bôna*

Consecutive:

(*a*) Simple: *ka bôna* (then I see/saw) > *ka se bônê*

(b) Progressive: *ka se sa bôna*

2.6. The following reasons may be offered in support of the view that *ka* is a deficient verb stem:

(1) *Ka*, like *sa*, is sometimes preceded by the morpheme *e-* when used in the participial mood, e.g. [1]

le gê ba eka re swara (even though they can/may/should catch us)

re bê re eka bôna (we could see)

As in the case of *sa*, this is an indication that *ka* is a monosyllabic verb stem.

(2) In relative constructions the relative morpheme *-go* may be suffixed either to *ka* or to the verb stem following it, e.g.

monna yô a kago bôna } (the man who
monna yô a ka bônago } can/may see)

diphôôfôlô tšê le kago di bôna; diphôôfôlô tšê le ka di bônago } (the animals which you can/may see)

bana ba ba kago tlô ngwala
bana ba ba ka tlôgo ngwala
bana ba ba ka tlô ngwalago } (the children who will be permitted to write).

Since the relative morpheme *-go* appears only after verb stems in Northern Sotho, we may infer that *ka* is a verb stem.

(3) There is a marked notional similarity between potential constructions and constructions involving the use of a deficient verb stem *ka* or its derivations, e.g.

o kilê wa mmôna a tshêga?[2] (could you have been you then saw him laughing?, i.e. have you ever seen him laughing?

o rôbêtše ekê o hwilê (he sleeps it may be he is dead, i.e. he sleeps as if he is dead), etc.

2.7. On the other hand, the view that *sa* and *ka* are prefixal morphemes can be justified on the grounds that they always appear directly before verb stems, or together with prefixal morphemes before verb stems. If they were real deficient verb stems the parts following them would not have been verb stems only, but full verbs, i.e. verb stems preceded by subjectival concords or the infinitive prefix *go*. See, for example, the following constructions involving the use of real deficient verbs:

o nyakilê go bôna lehôdu (he was on the point of seeing a thief)

o tlô napa a bôna lehôdu (he will thereupon see a thief)

ebilê o bôna lehôdu (he is moreover seeing a thief), etc.

Even in those cases where deficient verb stems seem to precede other verb stems we are able to show that they actually consist of deficient stems which have fused with the infinitive prefix, i.e. that there is no juxtaposition of two verb stems. Cf. e.g.

ke fô bôna (I am merely seeing < **ke fa go bôna*

ke filô bôna (I have merely seen) < **ke felê go bôna*

ke sa tšô bôna (I have just seen) < *ke sa tšwa go bôna*

ke nyakô bôna (I am on the point of seeing) < *ke nyaka go bôna*

Moreover, the position of *sa* and *ka* before verb stems corresponds in many cases to that of other prefixal morphemes, e.g.

re ka bôna (we may see)

re a bôna (we are seeing)

re sa dutšê (we are still sitting)

re ba bône (we have seen them)

2.8. We have to conclude, then, that there are equally good reasons to regard *sa* and *ka* as deficient verb stems and as prefixal morphemes of verbs. Normally it never occurs in Northern Sotho that linguistic forms have such a dual character. The only hypothesis which can explain this situation is that of Westermann (*vide* par. 1.1.) It means that *sa* and *ka* may be regarded as verb stems which are becoming for-

[1] Nor is this mentioned in grammars, but again many examples can be found in texts, where *e-* is usually written as a separate word.

[2] K. Endemann regarded forms like these as perfect potential (1876, p. 101)

mative elements. This is probably what Ziervogel had in mind when he called them "defektiewe hulpwerkwoorde" (1949). His use of the term "defektief" (which must not be confused with Doke's use of the term "defective") seems to imply that he regards them as deficient verb stems of which the verbal qualities are to some extent defective. In the later edition of the same work (1953) he calls them "werkwoordelike voorvoegsels", which implies that they are prefixes with verbal characteristics, or verb stems used as prefixes.

2.9. According to this hypothesis *sa* and *ka* have to be regarded as being verb stems and verb prefixes at the same time. This implies again that they are bimorphemic compounds as well as single morphemes. It also implies that the constructions in which they appear are neither purely poly-verbal nor purely mono-verbal, but poly-verbal and mono-verbal at the same time, i.e. they have characteristics of single words as well as of word-groups. If we regard words as morphological constructions and word-groups as syntactica-constructions, the progressive and potential constructions may be regarded as morpho-syntactical constructions. The differences between the views discussed above and their implications can be tabulated as follows:

	View adopted in older works	*View adopted by recent writers*	*Hypothesis accepted here*
(1) *Sa* and *ka* are:	(*a*) Deficient verbs	(*a*) Verb prefixes	(*a*) Deficient verb stems as well as verb prefixes
	(*b*) Bi-morphemic	(*b*) Mono-morphemic	(*b*) Bi-morphemic as well as mono-morphemic
(2) The progressive and potential constructions are:			
	(*a*) Word-groups	(*a*) Words	(*a*) Word-groups as well as words
	(*b*) Syntactical constructions	(*b*) Morphological constructions	(*b*) Morpho-syntactical constructions

It is evident that the "older" view is an approach to these constructions from what they were whereas the "modern" view is an approach from what they are becoming. The hypothesis accepted here approaches them from their very duality of character.

2.10. The present study is an attempt to explain the nature of the changes occurring in the progressive and potential constructions in terms of the hypothesis explained above. It aims at an indication of the trend of these constructions and a reconstruction of their original character in order to throw light on their present character. Flowing from this is a second aim, viz. to determine the grammatical nature of these constructions.

3. *The Tendency of the Change occurring in the Progressive and Potential Constructions*

3.1. From the preceding remarks it must be clear that *sa* and *ka* are changing from deficient verb stems to verb prefixes and that the constructions in which they occur are changing from bi-verbal word-groups into mono-verbal words. We may infer that if they continue to develop along these lines, they will eventually become pure verb prefixes with very little or no verbal characteristics. The change may, however, follow a completely different course or it may stop altogether at its present stage.

3.2. In the case of the progressive *sa* we may refer to Zulu, where its equivalent, *sa*, has none of the same marked verbal characteristics. The *sa* of Zulu is, for example, incorporated into verbs in such a way that it does not disturb the normal formation of negatives as in Northern Sotho. Thus:

Present tense:

angiɓoni (I am not seeing)

angisaɓoni (I am no longer seeing)

Perfect tense:
angilele (I am not asleep)
angisalele (I am no longer asleep)
Compare, however, the difference in the corresponding Northern Sotho forms:
Present tense:
ga ke bône (I am not seeing)
ga ke sa bôna (I am no longer seeing)
Perfect tense:
ga ke a rôbala
ga se ka rôbala } (I am not asleep)
ga ke se rôbale
ga ke sa rôbêtše (I am no longer asleep)
If the present tendency of the change occurring in the progressive construction persists, it may eventually result in something similar to the corresponding construction in Zulu.

3.3. Tswana offers a good example of the potential *ka* which is used almost purely as a verb prefix. In this language the potential negative may be formed according to the normal pattern of the indicative present tense, i.e. by prefixation of the negative morpheme *ga* and the change of the terminative morpheme to *-e*. The presence of *ka* affects it in no way. C.f. e.g.
Indicative present:
ga ba bône (they do not see)
Potential:
ga ba ka bône[1] } (they can/may not
ga ba ka ke ba bôna } see)
Participial present:
ba sa bône (they not seeing)
Participial potent:
ba sa ka ke ba bôna[2] (they not being permitted to see)
Compare the corresponding Northern Sotho forms:
Indicative present:
ga ba bône (they do not see)
Potential:
ba ka se bônê } (they can/may not
ba ka se kê ba bôna } see)
Participial present:
ba sa bône (they not seeing)
Participial potent:
ba ka se bônê } (they not being permitted
ba ka se kê ba bôna } to see)

4. *Reconstruction of the original Progressive Construction*

4.1. We have shown that the progressive construction in its present form is a morpho-syntactical construction containing the element *sa* which is at the same time a deficient verb stem and a verb prefix. The construction as such is something of a word-group and something of a word. The element *sa* must have been the deficient verb stem in the original construction, which implies that what follows *sa* must have been part of the original complementary verb. Cf. the following table:

Present Construction	Original Deficient Verb	Rest of original Complementary Verb
ba sa ithuta	*ba sa*	ithuta
ba sa rôbêtše	*ba sa*	*rôbêtše*
ba sa tlô boa	*ba sa*	*tlô boa*

It is evident that the original deficient verb has survived in unchanged form, whereas the original complementary verb no longer appears in full form. It will be necessary, therefore, to determine the character of the original complementary verb in order to reconstruct the original construction. This can be done only when the present nature of the complementary verb is studied.

4.2. There are two characteristics of what remains of the original complementary verb which reveal its nature. The first of these is the use of the morpheme *e-* with monosyllabic stems in the progressive construction,[3] e.g.
ke sa etla (I am still coming)
o sa etšwa (he is still coming out)

[1]The mono-verbal or basic negative of the potential does not seem to be frequently used and is not mentioned in the grammars of the language. Examples are to be found in texts, however.
[2]The deficient verb stem *ka* (*ba sa ka* ke. . .) is negated in the same way as the verb stem *bona* (*ba sa bône*) in the previous example.
[3]In most dialects this is restricted to the stem *tla* (come) only, but in certain dialects, and notably Kopa, almost all monosyllabic verb stems take *e-* in the progressive.

The morpheme *e-* is used normally with monosyllabic stems in two moods, viz. the imperative and the participial, e.g.

etla! (come!)
gê ke etla (if/when I am coming)

It can be ruled out immediately that the imperative was used in the original complementary verb, as it is never found that a complementary verb appears in the imperative in Northern Sotho. On the other hand the participial mood is frequently used for complementary verbs. It seems, therefore, that the verb stems *etla* and *etšwa* in the examples given above are remainders of original complementary verbs in the participial mood.

4.3. The second significant phenomenon is the use of the verb stem *le* in progressive copulatives of identification and definition in the present tense, e.g.

o sa le mogwêra wa ka (you are still my friend)
go sa le bjalô (it is still so)
e sa le gaê (it is still home)
ba sa le mô (they are still here)

The same stem is also used deficiently after *sa* in constructions like the following:

ba sa le ba tlogilê ⎫ (they have just gone; since
e sa le ba tlogilê ⎭ they have gone)

The verb stem *le* is used in the participial mood only, when the progressive indicative is excepted, e.g.

o bê o le mogwêra wa ka (you were my friend)
gê go le bjalô (if it is so)
gê e le gaê (if it is home)
ba bê ba le mô (they were here)

We have reason, therefore, to infer that *le* is in these cases the stem of an original complementary verb in the participial mood. If the complementary verb had been in any other mood than the participial, the copulative verb stem *ba* would have been used.

4.4. From the evidence of the use of *e-* with monosyllabic stems, and the use of the copulative verb stem *le* in progressive copulatives of identification and definition, we may infer that the original complementary verb following the deficient verb with the stem *sa* must have appeared in the participial mood. We may therefore postulate the following original forms for these progressive constructions:

Present Forms	Original Forms: Deficient Verb	Complementary verb, etc.
ba sa ithuta	**ba sa*	*ba ithuta*
o sa rôbêtše	**o sa*	*a rôbêtše*
ba sa tlô boa	**ba sa*	*ba tlô boa*
ke sa etla	**ke sa*	*ke etla*
e sa le gaê	**e sa*	*e le gaê*
ba sa le mô	**ba sa*	*ba le mô*

4.5. If the modern forms are compared with the original forms as reconstructed, it becomes clear that they differ only inasmuch as the modern forms lack the subjectival concord of the complementary verbs of the original forms. We may conclude, therefore, that the original progressive construction consisted of a deficient verb with the stem *sa* (presumably meaning *still be*) and a complementary verb in the participial mood. The subjectival concord of the complementary verb must have fallen away, as a result of which the deficient verb stem was juxtaposed to the rest of the complementary verb and was thus devaluated to a prefix of the original complementary verb, although it retained some of its verbal qualities.

4.6. It is evident that the reconstructions arrived at above do not apply to all progressive constructions, e.g., the subjunctive, infinitive and negative forms. If these were all free contractions of originally fuller forms, we would expect forms differing totally from what are actually found. Thus:

	Hypothetical Original Form	Free Contraction	Actual Modern Form
Subjunctive:	**gore ba sê ba bôna*	*gore ba sê bôna*	*gore ba sa bôna*
Infinitive:	**go sa (?)*	*?*	*go sa bôna*
Negative:	**ba sá ba sà bône*[1]	*ba sá sà bône*	——
	**ga ba se ba bôna*	*ga ba se bôna*	*ga ba sa bôna*

[1]In the first case it is assumed that the complementary verb is negated and in the second case that the deficient verb is negated.

4.7. These cases do not, however, reduce the value of the reconstructions arrived at above. We may assume that the contractions took place only in the positive indicative forms which occur much more frequently than the forms discussed above. Once a new pattern was created, other constructions were modelled on it. As a result of the contractions in the positive indicative forms *sa* was felt to be a verb prefix, yet at the same time the consciousness of its verbal character remained. Thus the deficient verb was negated in all the negative constructions whilst the old complementary verbs were left unchanged. The consciousness of its new character prevented *sa* from being changed according to the normal rules of negation. Similarly the consciousness of the verbal nature of *sa* prevented the change of the terminating morpheme of the original complementary verb to *-ê* in the subjunctive, but at the same time the consciousness of its new, prefixal nature prevented it from being changed itself. In the case of the infinitive *sa* is used as a prefix before verb stems, but as it is still felt to be partly a deficient verb no change is made in the termination of the verb stems in the negative.

5. *Reconstruction of the original Potential Construction*

5.1. As it was remarked before [par. 2.6.], there is a marked notional similarity between the potential morpheme *ka* and a still active deficient verb stem *ka*. This deficient verb stem is translated in different ways, depending on the tense, mood, actuality, and context in which it appears, but it is evident that its basic meaning is in every case the same as that of the potential morpheme. The still active deficient verb stem appears in the following contexts:

(*a*) As a deficient verb stem, followed by the consecutive mood, and usually translated as *once* or *ever* in the positive and as *never* in the negative, e.g.

o kile wa bôna monna a lla? (could you have been you then saw a man crying? i.e. have you ever seen a man crying?)

na re tlô ka ra boa gapê? (will we possibly be we then return again? i.e. will we ever return again?)

o bê a sêšo a ka a ja nama (he could not yet have been he then ate meat, i.e. he had never yet eaten meat)

When appearing in the habitual and subjunctive moods, this stem is usually followed by the same moods, e.g.

bahlale ba ke ba phêgišane (wise men may usually be they usually argue, i.e. wise men are ever arguing)

a re kê re bolêdišanê (may we be we converse, i.e. let us converse a little)

(*b*) As a negated deficient verb stem, followed by the consecutive mood, in the so-called compound, bi-verbal or emphatic negative constructions, e.g.

ga re a ka ra bôna batho ba ba bjalô (we could not have been we then saw such people, i.e. we have never seen such people)

cf. *ga re a bôna batho ba ba bjalô* (we have not seen such people)

ra se kê ra gahlana nayê gapê (then we can/could not be we then meet/met with him again, i.e. and then we do/did not at all meet with him again)

cf. *ra se gahlanê nayê gapê* (and then we do/did not meet with him again)

ba bê ba sa ka ba boa (they were they could not have been they then return, i.e. they had not returned at all)

cf. *ba bê ba sa boa* (they had not returned)

go rata gore ba se kê ba boa (it wants that they may not be they then return, i.e. it is desirable that they do not return at all)

cf. *go rata gore ba se boê* (it is desirable that they do not return), etc.

(*c*) As a deficient verb stem with the variant form of *kê*, usually preceded by the invariable concords *e-* or *n-*. In these cases it is non-influencing as far as the complementary verbs are concerned and is usually translated with (*it is*) *as if*, e.g.

eka/ekê/nka/nkê go bolêla motho (it is as if somebody is speaking, i.e. it may be somebody is speaking)

o rôbêtše eka/ekê/nka/nkê o hwilê (he sleeps it may be he is dead, i.e. he sleeps as if he is dead)

(*d*) As a semi-copulative verb stem[1] usually translated by *be, like*, e.g.

lehu la lenaba e ka la gago (the death of an enemy may be yours, i.e. the death of an enemy is like yours)

This stem is also used in certain compound nouns, e.g.

se-ka-phiri (something like a hyena; lit.: something-may-be-hyena)

(*e*) In cohortative constructions, appearing without a concord or preceded by the invariable concord *n-*, e.g.

a (n)kê re thômê (may it be we begin, i.e. let us begin)

5.2. We may assume that the potential morpheme is related to this still active deficient verb stem, i.e. that this deficient stem is a prototype of the potential morpheme. The fact that the subjectival concord of the first person singular appears as *n-* instead of *ke* before the potential morpheme and this deficient stem—and only in these cases—proves that such an assumption is not without grounds. Thus:

nka bôna (I can/may see)
nkilê ka *mmôna* (I once saw him)
ga nke ke bolêle nayê (I never speak to him)
ga se nke ka mmôna (I never saw him)

5.3. A clue to the original nature of the potential construction is provided by its negative form, where the negative morpheme *se* and the termination *-ê* are used, e.g.

nka go thuša (I can/may help you) > *nka se go thušê*,

ba ka bôna (they can/may see) > *ba ka se bônê*

According to the hypothesis accepted, the part of the construction containing these morphemes is the rest of the original complementary verbs. We may infer, therefore, that in the original construction the complementary verb was negated and that the complementary verb must have appeared in a mood which is negated by means of the aforementioned morphemes, i.e.

Present Form	Deficient Verb	Rest of complementary Verb
nka se go thušê	*nka*	*se go thušê*
ba ka se kê ba bona	*ba ka*	*se kê ba bôna*

There are three moods in Northern Sotho of which the negatives are formed by means of the negative morpheme *se* and the termination *-ê*, viz. the subjunctive, the infinitive and the consecutive, e.g.

gore re se bônê } (in order that we do not
gore re se kê ra bôna } see)
ra se bônê } (then we do/did not see)
ra se kê ra bôna }
go se bônê (not to see)

It seems improbable that the original complementary verb could have appeared in the subjunctive mood, because if that were the case the positive forms would also have ended in *-ê*, i.e. *re ka thômê* (we can/may begin) instead of *re ka thôma*. Nor could it have appeared in the infinitive, as the infinitive has no compound, bi-verbal or emphatic negative like the potential. This leaves only the consecutive.

5.4. It will be noticed that the semantically related and still active deficient verb stem *ka* and its derivations are followed by the consecutive in the greatest number of cases [cf. 5.1.] If this evidence is combined with that of the negative, we may conclude that the complementary verb in the original potential construction must have appeared in the consecutive. Thus:

Present Form	Reconstructed Original Form	
	Deficient Verb	Complementary Verb
ba ka bôna	**ba ka*	*ba bôna*
re ka tlô bôna	**re ka*	*ra tlô bôna*
o ka se dirê	**o ka*	*wa se dirê*

[1]The term "semi-copulative verb stem" is used for verb stems which, though not functioning as copulas, have some of the morphological characteristics of copulative verbs. Note in this case the use of an invariable concord.

di ka se tlô fula	**di ka*	*tša se tlô fula*
le-ka se kê la nthuša	**le ka*	*la se kê la nthuša*

From this we may infer that the present duality of character of the potential construction is due to the contraction of an original construction involving the use of a deficient verb stem meaning *permitted to be* (Afrikaans: *mag/kan*) and a complementary verb in the consecutive mood as a result of the loss of the subjectival concord of the complementary verb. The deficient stem *ka* was then juxtaposed to what was left of the complementary verb and was thus partly devaluated to a prefixal morpheme. We may also infer that the complementary verb of the original construction was negated and not the deficient verb as seems to be the case in the progressive construction.

5.5. The subjunctive and infinitive forms of the potential construction cannot, however, be said to be contractions of originally fuller forms. If this were the case, we would find *kê* instead of *ka* in the subjunctive, e.g.

**gore re kê ra thôma* > **gore re kê thôma.*

It seems that we actually have a new construction patterned on those constructions in which contractions took place. In a sentence like *go rata gore re ka thôma* (it wants, i.e. it is desirable, that we may start) it is actually *ka* which is used subjunctively because it is still something of a verb stem. On the other hand, however, the consciousness of its new character as a verb prefix prevents it from being changed to *kê*. In the case of the infinitive there can be no contraction either, because the infinitive has no subjectival concord which can be reduplicated in the complementary verb. We must accept, therefore, that *ka* is here also used by way of analogy with the other constructions which are contractions.

5.6. The fact that the subjectival concord of class I appears as *a* in the potential construction and not as *o* may seem to reduce the value of our reconstruction, e.g.

a ka tloga bjalê (he may leave now) instead of *o ka tloga*[1]

There are no data to provide a clue to this change of concord. The most satisfactory explanation seems to be that it is the result of analogy. Those moods which form their negatives in a similar way [cf. par. 5.3.] all use *a* as subjectival concord of class I, e.g.

ke rata gore a se bolêlê (I want him not to talk)
a homola a se bolêlê gapê (then he is/was silent and does/did not talk again)

It may be that the concord *a* was used by analogy with these constructions also in the potential construction.

5.7. It is interesting to observe that the potential construction of Tswana has probably followed another course in the case of the negative. In Northern Sotho the old complementary verb is negated; in certain dialects of Tswana the old deficient verb is negated by means of the negative morpheme *ga*. Thus:

Positive Form	Neg. N. Sotho	Neg. Tswana
baka bôna (they can/may see)	*ba ka se bônê*	*ga ba ka bône*
	ba ka se kê ba bôna	*ga ba ka ke ba bôna*
re ka tla (we can/may come)	*re ka se tlê*	*ga re ka tle*
	re ka se kê ra tla	*ga re ka ke ra tla*

This explains also why there is no difference in the indicative and participial negatives of the potential in Northern Sotho[2] whereas there is a difference in Tswana, e.g.

Positive Form	Negative Forms
N. Sotho:	
re ka bôna (we can/may see)	*re ka se bônê*
	re ka se kê ra bôna
gê re ka bôna	*gê re ka se bônê*
	ge re ka se kê ra bôna

[1]The concord *o* is used in certain Tswana dialects.
[2]i.e. in phonetic form. They differ tonologically, however.

Tswana:

re ka bôna	*ga re ka bône*
	ga re ka ke ra bôna
fa re ka bôna	*fa re sa ka ke ra bôna*

The fact that the verb following *ka* changes its termination to *-e* proves moreover that *ka* is much further on its way to a verb prefix than its Northern Sotho counterpart [cf. par. 3.3.].

6. *General Conclusions regarding* sa *and* ka

6.1. It is clear from the foregoing that the progressive and potential constructions are constructions involving the use of the deficient verb stems *sa* and *ka* respectively which have contracted into morpho-syntactical constructions as a result of the loss of the subjectival concords of the complementary verbs. As a result of this loss the deficient verb stems are juxtaposed to what are left of the complementary verbs, and they are therefore partly devaluated to mere prefixes of the stems of the complementary verbs. The deficient verb stems have not lost their verbal character completely, however, and consequently we find the paradoxical situation that they are now verb stems as well as verb prefixes, yet fully neither the one nor the other. The progressive and potential constructions differ only in that the "deficient verb" is negated in the former whereas the "complementary verb" is negated in the latter. In both cases constructions occur which do not seem to be the result of contractions but which have been introduced by analogy with contracted forms. It seems further that if these constructions develop consistently along the lines they are following now, they will eventually be verb prefixes with little or no verbal properties. The progressive construction of Zulu and the potential construction of Tswana illustrate the use of these morphemes as verb prefixes without verbal properties.

6.2. The question now arises how these morpho-syntactical constructions should be written in a conjunctive orthography. Words are usually written as single groups of symbols, whereas word-groups are written as various groups of symbols, the number of groups depending on the number of constituent words. The obvious answer is to write these constructions with hyphens, showing where the loss of the subjectival concord of the complementary occurred. In the following table a number of examples are written according to the various views discussed:

Present Orthography	Written conjunctively as word groups	Written conjunctively as single words	Written conjunctively as morpho-synt. construct.
ba sa tloga	*basa tloga*	*basatloga*	*basa-tloga*
ga ba sa tloga	*gabasa tloga*	*gabasatloga*	*gabasa-tloga*
ba ka tloga	*baka tloga*	*bakatloga*	*baka-tloga*
ba ka se tlogê	*baka setlogê*	*bakasetlogê*	*baka-setlogê*
ba ka se kê ba tloga	*baka sekê batloga*	*bakasekê batloga*	*baka-sekê batloga*

7. *Views regarding the Grammatical Nature of the Progressive and Potential Constructions*

7.1. The constructional analysis of the progressive and potential offered in this paper puts a big question mark over the current views regarding their grammatical nature. It is necessary, therefore to proceed to a grammatical analysis of these constructions.

7.2. The progressive construction is seldom regarded as a special grammatical feature in the literature on Northern Sotho. Most writers classify it with ordinary deficient verb constructions, or do not classify it at all. In most of the modern works on other South African Bantu languages the progressive is regarded as a category of *implication* (cf. e.g. Doke, 1935 and 1943; Van Eeden, 1941; Cole, 1955). The categories of implication refer to some previous state or action (cf. Doke, 1941, p. 45), and are treated as sub-divisions of moods and tenses.

Three implications are generally recognized, viz. the simple, the progressive, and the exclusive.[1]

7.3. On the other hand the potential construction is mostly regarded as a special mood of the verb. As far as Northern Sotho is concerned it is called as *potential mood* by K. Endemann (1876) and Ziervogel (1949 and 1953), a *conditional* mood by Franz, and a *conjunctive* mood by T. Endemann (1939). Most writers on other languages spoken in South Africa hold more or less similar views (cf. e.g. Wookey, 1949; Van Eeden, 1941; Engelbrecht, 1943; Doke, 1945; Malcolm, 1949; Fox; Ziervogel, 1952; Junod, 1932, etc.). In his grammar of Tswana, Cole calls it a *conditional* mood, but he classifies it with the indicative as a *primary* mood. The view of Jacottet (1950) and Paroz (1946) that the potential is a special tense of the verb forms a striking exception.

7.4. It is evident that all those writers who classify the potential as a mood regard it as a non-indicative construction. Most writers seem to hold the view that it has nothing in common with the indicative. Even Cole who classes it with the indicative still implies that it is non-indicative.

7.5. The position is then that the potential is generally regarded as a non-indicative mood whereas the progressive is not regarded as a special mood. Our present analysis is mostly concerned with the potential. This construction will therefore be compared morphologically and notionally with the indicative in order to determine whether the view that it is non-indicative can be justified. It will then be compared with the progressive before a conclusion will be arrived at.

8. *Morphological Comparison of the Potential and the Indicative*

8.1. The first question to answer is whether there are any morphological phenomena associated with the potential construction which justify the view that it constitutes a non-indicative mood. Before an answer can be given it will be necessary to re-examine the original and present characteristics of the potential construction as regards its morphology.[2]

8.2. In our constructional analysis we concluded that the present potential construction of Northern Sotho is a contracted form of an earlier form in which the morpheme *ka* was used as a deficient verb stem followed by the consecutive. We also concluded that the earlier construction was probably related to constructions which are still used and in which a deficient verb stem *ka*, or its derivations, are used, e.g.

na re tlô ka ra bôna? (will we ever see?)
re kilê ra bôna (we once saw), etc.

It is evident that the original construction constituted no special non-indicative mood, but that it was used in various moods just as the constructions in which the still active deficient verb stem occurs are used in various moods. It is obvious, if the original form of *re ka bôna* (we can/may see) was **re ka ra bôna*, and if the original form appeared in the indicative mood, that the present form is also indicative.

8.3. It may be argued that the very fact that the potential is a morpho-syntactical construction and no longer a deficient verb construction proves that it is non-indicative. This argument implies, however, that other morpho-syntactical constructions are also non-indicative moods, e.g.

re sa bôna (we are still seeing) < **re sa re bôna*
re tlô bôna (we shall see) < **re tla go bôna*
re nô bôna (we are merely seeing) < **re na go bôna*, etc.

Since these constructions are never regarded as special non-indicative moods of the verb, it would be inconsistent to use this argument to prove that the potential is a special mood.

8.4. The use of the morpheme *ka* in the potential construction may be used as a criterion to decide that it constitutes a non-indicative mood. This argument implies in the first place

[1]The exclusive implication does not appear in Northern Sotho. Lanham (1955) also recognizes a *prior* implication for giTonga.

[2]The term "morphology" is here used with reference to the formal characteristics of a construction, irrespective of the question whether it is a word or not.

that the use of *ka* in all other environments should also identify non-indicative moods. This includes those constructions in which the active deficient verb stem *ka* occurs. In the second place it implies that all morphologically parallel forms also indicate non-indicative moods. This again involves the morpho-syntactical constructions like those illustrated in the preceding paragraph. It is obvious that this criterion cannot be applied either.

8.5. It may be taken that the use of *n-* instead of *ke* as subjectival concord of the first person singular proves that the potential construction constitutes a non-indicative mood. It was shown, however, that *n-* appears also before the active deficient verb stem *ka*, irrespective of the mood in which it appears. This does not, therefore, prove anything.

8.6. Another morphological feature of the potential construction is the use of *a* as subjectival concord for class I. This fact can be used in favour of the argument that the potential is a non-indicative mood of the verb, since all non-indicative moods except the infinitive use *a* whereas the indicative uses *o*. Thus:

Subjunctive: *gore a dirê* (in order that he works)

Consecutive: *a dira* (then he works/worked)

Participial: *gê a dira* (if/when he works), etc.

If such an argument were consistently applied, however, one would have to conclude that negative indicative constructions are also non-indicative because they also use *a*, e.g.

ga a dire (he does not work)

ga se a dira
ga se a dire
ga a a dira } (he did not work)

ga a sa tlô dira (he will no longer work), etc. We may conclude, then, that the use of *a* instead of *o* as subjectival concord for class I does not prove either that the potential is a non-indicative mood.

8.7. The negative form of the potential construction may also create the impression that the potential is non-indicative, since the negative morpheme *se* and the termination *-ê* are used only in the negation of non-indicative moods. Our constructional analysis proved, however, that this is due to character of the original complementary verb [cf. par. 5.3.]. It cannot therefore be used as an argument to prove that potential constructions are always non-indicative.

8.8. After these points have been considered we have to conclude that there are no morphological grounds on which the view that the potential construction constitutes a non-indicative mood can be based. On the contrary, there appears to be good reasons to conclude that the potential construction can be used indicatively.

9. *Notional Comparison of the Potential and the Indicative*

9.1. The indicative may be defined as the mood used for factual statements. This implies that it is primarily used for statements, although it may also be related to factual occurrences. It should not be taken that the indicative mood always refers to actual facts. A sentence like *ke a mmôna* (I see him) may in most cases refer to an actual occurrence, but it may also be used by a speaker who does not see. If the latter is the case, it does not imply that the sentence is not indicative any more. On the other hand other moods may also be used of actual occurrences, but they can never be statements. The phrase *a eja* (he eating) in the sentence *ke mmôna a eja* (I see him eating) may for instance refer to an actual occurrence, but it can never function as a statement of that factual occurrence.

9.2. Because the indicative mood is used for statements, it is almost always used as the basis of main clauses. Accordingly it is never found that non-indicative moods function as main clauses of sentences, even though they may appear to be statements of actual occurrences. The consecutive may, for instance, sometimes be used as the main verb of a sentence, e.g. *ra êm̂a ra tloga* (then we stand/stood up and go/went off). But even in those cases it does not constitute the main clause, for the actions denoted by the consecutive always follow on previous actions. The consecutive is therefore syntactically dependent on preceding statements.

9.3. It is of the utmost importance that the model character of a construction must be

inferred from the construction as a whole and not from one of the constituent morphemes or a cluster of morphemes in the construction only. The verb stem in the verb *ga ke bône*(I do not see) is in itself no statement. Moreover it does not refer to an actual occurrence, since the whole construction implies that there is not an act of seeing. Yet the whole verb *ga ke bône* is a statement of not seeing and may as such refer to the actuality of not seeing. For this reason the construction has to be regarded as indicative.

9.4. The view that the potential construction constitutes a special non-indicative mood seems to be based on the fact that it refers to potentialities and not actual occurrences.[1] Apart from the fact that the indicative is not always used for actual occurrences, such an approach is based on an analysis of the modal character of the stem only (i.e. the rest of the complementary verb, in terms of our previous analysis). Although the sentence *re ka bôna* (we can/may see) does not refer to an act of seeing, it is the *statement of the potentiality* of seeing, just as *ga ke bône* (I do not see) is the statement of the absence of seeing. Moreover, a potential construction like *re ka bôna* (we can/may see) can function as a main clause and as such constitute an independent sentence just like any indicative construction.

9.5. It may also be mentioned that it never occurs in Northern Sotho that a predicative appears in two moods simultaneously. Thus a predicative cannot be indicative as well as participial, infinitive as well as subjunctive, consecutive as well as habitual, etc. Yet the potential construction appears in most of the moods, except, according to the general view, in the indicative, e.g.

Participial Potential:

gê re ka bôna (if we can/may/should see)

Subjunctive Potential:

gore re ka bôna (in order that we can/may/should see)

Infinitive Potential:

go ka bôna (to be permitted to see; Afrikaans: om te kan/mag sien)

It may be asked why a potential construction cannot be indicative when it is used as the main clause of a sentence and thus to state a possibility, ability, condition or supposition, when it is regarded as infinitive when appearing in an infinitive construction.

9.6. We have to conclude, then, that there are neither any notional grounds for the view that the potential constitutes a non-indicative mood. On the contrary, it is clear that the potential construction can be used indicatively like the progressive and any other morpho-syntactical construction.

10. *Conclusions regarding the Grammatical Nature of the Progressive and Potential Constructions*

10.1. Our morphological and notional comparison of the indicative and the potential proves that there is no justification for the view that the latter is a special non-indicative mood. It is clear that it can appear in a number of moods including the indicative. Our earlier constructional analysis proved also that the progressive and potential constructions are similar grammatical phenomena in that they are both contracted forms of earlier constructions involving the use of deficient verbs. It is evident that these two constructions should be grouped together grammatically.

10.2. According to the grammatical approach of Doke it would be most convenient to regard the potential as an *implication* and class it together with the progressive and other implications.[2] In that case it will be necessary, however, to modify the definition of the term "implication" or to discard the term altogether in favour of another term, since the potential does not refer to some previous state or action [cf. par. 7.2].

10.3. The term which is suggested here is *secondary aspect*. It may be said that deficient

[1] Cf. the definition of Doke: ". . . expressive of ability . . ." and ". . . implying a condition or supposition . . ." (1943, p. 49).

[2] In a recent article (1955) J. A. Louw suggested that the potential of Zulu be regarded as an implication in view of its morphological parallelism to the progressive construction.

verb constructions denote various *aspects* of moods and tenses since deficient verbs modify complementary verbs with respect to the lapse or nature of the action or state.[1] The potential and progressive constructions are, however, no longer pure deficient verb constructions, although they clearly have the same function as deficient verb constructions. In view of their secondary constructional nature it is, therefore, advisable to call them *secondary* aspects. The qualification "secondary" is useful also for the reason that it does not prevent the view, widely held, that Bantu languages have no tenses but only time aspects. The progressive and potential (and other similar phenomena) may then be regarded as secondary or further aspectual modifications of the basic aspects.

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[1] Cf. Nida's definition of the term aspect (1948, p. 167): ". . . the kind of action", and ". . . a type of process, a quality or a state".

NOTES AND NEWS

OBITUARY: Dr S. M. MOFOKENG

Sophonia Machabe Mofokeng was born on 1 April 1923, near Fouriesburg, O.F.S. He was educated at the local Dutch Reformed Church Primary School, the Stofberggedenkskool, and the Adams Mission High School, Natal, where at the age of sixteen, he matriculated in the first class in 1939, with distinctions in Southern Sotho and Botany. From 1940 to 1942 he was at Fort Hare University College, where he obtained the Diploma in Education and the B.A. degree with distinction in Southern Sotho. He then took up a teaching appointment with the Johannesburg Bantu High School, and registered as a part-time student in the University of the Witwatersrand for the B.A.Hons degree in History. In 1944 he was appointed a part-time Language Assistant in the Department of Bantu Studies, while continuing with his History Honours which he completed at the end of that year, thus becoming the first African B.A. Hons. graduate in History of this University. In 1945 he was appointed full-time Junior Language Assistant, and immediately commenced reading for the B.A. Hons. in Bantu Languages, which was awarded him in the first class, in March, 1947. This was followed by promotion to the rank of Language Assistant in Sotho. Only a few months later, in August 1947, he was admitted to hospital with tuberculosis in both lungs, and underwent drastic treatment there for 18 months.

In January 1949 he was able to return to duty after winning over his affliction what his doctors have described as a victory of quite exceptional personal courage, determination and patience. He now commenced work on the dissertation, "A Study of Folktales in Sotho", for which he was awarded the M.A. degree in 1951. The following year his first book, *Senkatana*, a play in Southern Sotho based on a popular folktale, was published by the Witwatersrand University Press in the "Bantu Treasury Series". Much of this, and also of his second book, was written while in hospital. The latter book, *Leetong*, a collection of sketches and essays in Southern Sotho, was published in 1954 by the Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel. About the same time a second volume of essays, *Pelong ea ka*, was accepted for the "Bantu Treasury Series", but has not yet been published. In 1954 also, he was promoted to the rank of Senior Language Assistant, a special appointment for outstanding ability and achievement. The following year, in March, 1955, he was awarded the Ph.D. degree for his thesis "The Development of Leading Figures in Animal Tales in Africa"—thus becoming the first, and to date, the only Non-White recipient of this degree from the University of the Witwatersrand. Meanwhile he had been collaborating with Prof. C. M. Doke in the preparation of a *Textbook of Southern Sotho Grammar*, of which he completed correction of the final proofs quite recently.

Even for a completely healthy and vigorous man all this would have been no mean achievement. But although cured of his affliction, Dr Mofokeng never regained his former strength and energy, and was constantly frustrated by his physical disabilities, not to mention the numerous other frustrations of his environment and situation for so sensitive an intellect and personality. However, his magnificent sense of humour and philosophical outlook enabled him to bear these with uncomplaining cheerfulness and fortitude.

In his Department Dr Mofokeng was regarded as the authority on all aspects of Southern Sotho language and literature, and on Bantu folklore, which had become his major research interest. But, while quite amazingly modest, this was a man of very wide interests and culture, backed by extensive study and reading—no mere narrow-visioned specialist in his own field. He had an outstanding knowledge and deep and critical appreciation of European art, music and literature (he read French, German and Flemish, as well as being completely fluent in English and

Afrikaans); of biology, history, philosophy, religious thought, and political theory. Dr Mofokeng's ever-cheerful nature and warm, friendly and sympathetic personality endeared him to everyone, not least to his students who developed a sincere and affectionate regard for him. His death on 6 June 1957, after several weeks in hospital, came as a great shock to his colleagues, and leaves an irreparable gap in the Department of Bantu Languages, in the University of the Witwatersrand, and in the thin ranks of Bantu linguists and folklorists in South Africa.

D.T.C.

COMMITTEE FOR TRADITIONAL AFRICAN LITERATURE

1. The Inter-Africa Conference for Social Sciences at Bukavu 1955 recommended that a Committee of Africanists versed in the traditional literatures of the various peoples of Africa be appointed and that this Committee be given the task of organizing the recording and translation of the most important items in all types of traditional literature.

2. In the spirit of this recommendation, a representative meeting held in London for the purpose of putting in motion Bukavu recommendations, appointed a Committee for Traditional African Literature with the following as the initial membership:

Professor A. Burssens (Chairman), Verschansing Straat 4, Mariakerke (Ghent), Belgium: Languages of the Belgian Congo.

Dr. G. Atkins, School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, London, W.C.1: Languages of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

Dr W. H. Whiteley, East African Institute for Social Research, Box 262, Kampala, Uganda: Languages of East Africa.

Dr J. Berry, School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, London, W.C.1: Languages of West Africa.

Professor D. Ziervogel, University of South Africa, P.O. Box 392, Pretoria, Union of South Africa: Languages of South Africa and South-West Africa.

Dr R. de Sá Nogueira, Instituto Superior de Estudos Ultramarinos, Praça do Principe Real, 20, Lisbon, Portugal: Languages of Portugese Africa.

To be nominated: Languages of French Africa.

The Committee, which will work by correspondence, was asked to formulate a plan of action for the recording, translation and publication of traditional literature.

3. We understand "African Traditional Literature" to include:

(*a*) poetry, including songs, prayers, incantations, etc.

(*b*) folklore, tales, proverbs, riddles, etc.

(*c*) traditional histories, chronicles, epics, etc.

(*d*) oratory, forensic and otherwise.

And we further understand that modern works may be included where these are traditional in form or content.

4. Our ultimate aim is to arrange for the publication of as many important items of all types as is possible in a collection of uniform pattern, in a French and/or English translation and, in certain cases, with their original texts, and with an introduction, and, where necessary, notes. Such a collection would be intended not primarily for specialists but for all those, of whatever nationality, who might wish to learn something of the literary heritage of Africa. It is thought that priority might be given in the first instance, to works of intrinsic literary merit which do not require a special knowledge of the cultural background of the country of origin.

5. To this end the Committee considers its primary task to be the assembling of relevant information and material, and it seeks the co-operation and help of all specialists in this field.

6. There are works already published in African languages, sometimes with translations in European languages, which are known only to specialists or are long out of print or are for

other reasons inaccessible to the lay reader. A beginning might be made with these.

7. There undoubtedly exist unpublished MSS. in libraries and private hands which might prove to fall within the purview of the Committee. It would be most helpful if the existence of such MSS. could be made known to the Committee so as to enable a list of them to be compiled.

8. Besides written material there are now also mechanical recordings (and the number is growing) of which some no doubt merit transcription, translation and eventual publication. Here again a list would be useful.

9. But there remains a considerable body of traditional literature in Africa which so far is unrecorded and is therefore in danger of being lost. The Committee wishes to suggest:

(*a*) that there are many Africans qualified to collect and write down their traditional literature, who would do so if only sufficiently encouraged;

(*b*) that those engaged in research in other social sciences in Africa or in close contact with the life of the indigenous peoples as, for example, missionaries, should make themselves responsible for collecting the traditional literature of their area.

10. In this respect the Committee is eager to know from those engaged in field work in Africa of any areas particularly rich in traditional literature, especially those areas where present documentation is wholly inadequate or where urgency is involved.

11. It is our intention to compile and maintain a list of those already engaged in the type of work mentioned in the preceding paragraph, who are at the same time qualified and willing to act as translators.

12. Will those specialists who have information to offer on any of the above points communicate as soon as possible with the appropriate member of the Committee or with the Chairman himself (A. Burssens, Seminarie voor Bantoe- en Soedantalen, Universiteit Gent, Universiteitstraat 14, Ghent, Belgium, or: Verschansingstraat 4, Mariakerke (Ghent).

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THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NIGERIA

In December 1956 there appeared the first issue (Vol. 1, No. 1) of the *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*. It contains articles by K. Onwuka Diké: "John Beecroft, 1849-54"; J. D. Fage: "The investigation of oral tradition in the northern territories of the Gold Coast"; J. C. Anene: "The Southern Nigeria Protectorate, 1900-02"; B. E. B. Fagg: "The rock gong complex today and in prehistoric times" (with 19 photographs); S. O. Biobaku: "Problems of traditional history"; T. O. Ogunkoya: "The early history of Ijebu", and "Research Notes". The Society also publishes a quarterly *Bulletin of News*.

The aim of the Society, which was founded in 1955, is to promote by all possible means both interest in and work in connection with the study of history in Nigeria, with particular emphasis on Nigerian history. Membership is open to all. The President of the Society is Dr. K. O. Diké, Professor of History, University College, Ibadan, and Chairman of the Nigerian Antiquities Commission.

The work of the Society consists in encouraging and co-ordinating historical research by members, especially in connection with the study of Nigerian history; assisting teachers in their efforts to improve standards of history teaching in Nigeria, and stimulating interest in the study of history among the general public. The aim is to carry on this work by means of publications, congresses, lecture courses, group discussions, exhibitions, conducted visits to historical sites, etc. Every effort is made to foster personal contact and exchange of ideas among members and to keep members in touch with developments in the world of historical study. The Society maintains contact with other organisations for the promotion of historical studies. The information service of the Society is available

for the use of members at all times. It undertakes as far as possible to give advice on any questions connected with the study or teaching of history which members care to raise.

Enquiries should be addressed to the Honorary Secretary, Historical Society of Nigeria, Arts Building, University College, Ibadan.

D.T.C.

THREE BUSHMAN LANGUAGES

From PROFESSOR L. F. MAINGARD,

JOHANNESBURG

In my article entitled "Three Bushman Languages", which was published in *African Studies*, 16, 1, 1957, there appeared a number of typographical errors to which I should like to draw attention.

Page	*Col.*	*Line*	*Errata*	*Correcta*
38	1	43	hei/kum	hei//kum
42	1	12	tʃ ʔaIda	tʃ ʔaIi da
45	1	25	//na	//ŋa
47	1	35	m !no	m !ŋo
48	1	10	//na	//ŋa
48	1	28, 30	/na	/ŋa
50	1	19, 20, 26	/na	/ŋa
51	1	27	/ni	/ŋi
55	1	10	t/ʔiŋ!ʔa	tʃ ʔiŋ!ʔa
61	1	28	‡ʔolka	‡ʔoloka

LES NOIRS DANS LES MONDE

This is the sub-title of the journal *Échanges* for May 1957 (No. 31), published from 16 Rue St. Jean Baptiste de la Salle, Paris 6. The titles of the 18 articles in this issue include the following: "Racisme et christianisme", "Origine du préjugé de couleur", L'Afrique noire en quête d'un équilibre", "L'univers religieux négro-africain", "La Ségrégation raciale en Afrique du Sud", "La Culture orale", "Le problème noir aux, Etats-Unis", "Réservé aux Européens" "Proverbes dahoméens", etc.

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF LINGUISTS

The VIII International Congress of Linguists took place from 5th to 9th August, 1957, in Oslo, Norway. The Congress, which was sponsored by UNESCO, was attended by delegates from all over the world. The programme for the plenary and sectional meetings included 24 papers, in addition to which there were some 60 "individual communications". The papers and communications dealt with a very wide range of problems of general and specific linguistic interest. In addition there was an exhibition of linguistic literature published since the VII Congress (London, 1952), the emphasis being on publications on general linguistics, comparative philology, phonetics, etc.

Further details, and copies of the Reports and, in due course, the Proceedings of the Congress, may be obtained from the Secretary (Miss Eva Sivertsen), Kirkeveien 98 AIII, Oslo NV, Norway.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE STUDY OF RITUAL

Symbolic Wounds: Puberty Rites and the Envious Male. BRUNO BETTELHEIM. Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press. 1954, 286 pp., 1 plate. $4.75.

Chisungu: A Girl's Initiation among the Bemba of Northern Rhodesia. AUDREY I. RICHARDS. London: Faber and Faber. 1956. 224 pp., 17 plates, line drawings. 42s.

Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa. MONICA WILSON. Oxford University Press for International African Institute. London: 1957. xii+278 pp., 8 plates, genealogies. 35s.

These books show some interesting similarities and differences. All three stem largely from a dissatisfaction with the tendency previous writers have shown to find in other people's rituals what H. A. Murray (in reference to other people's fantasies) once described as "such admirable ink blots" for their own projections[1]: Professor Wilson describes anthropological literature as "bespattered with symbolic guessing, the ethnographer's interpretation of the rituals of other people" (p. 6). Dr Richards, discussing interpretations that have been made of the phenomenon of sex-role reversal in ritual, says: "Psychological interpretations are bound to be of the heads-you-win and tails-you-lose type [*sic*]. If a woman behaves submissively in ritual, the explanation offered is that she is expressing the sex role that is proper to a woman in a society in which meekness in women is admired; if she swaggers, the explanation is that she is reacting from this submissive role" (p. 119). There could be no better illustration of the lengths to which this type of interpretation is sometimes taken than the following passage from Roheim's *The Eternal Ones of the Dream* (cited by Bettelheim, p. 125*n*.): "The bull-roarer which symbolizes both the male and the female genital organ, the primal scene and the combined parent concept, the father and the mother, separation and reunion, the trauma and the reaction to the trauma, the conservative and the progressive aspects of the libido, represents both the path and the goal". Dr Bettelheim, remarking on the biassing effect of a strong commitment to the doctrines (what he more politely calls the theories) of psycho-analysis, says: "If the investigator introduces into the field of observation and interpretation strong convictions on the universal validity of certain theoretical speculations, he may take theory for fact" (p. 72). The danger of distortion, he points out, is greater in any subject on which Freud expressed himself strongly; and this is specially true of his interpretation of pubertal circumcision as symbolic castration by a father figure. The position is made even worse by the fact that the frequency with which a psycho-analyst encounters castration anxiety among his (Western) patients is likely to incline him to regard initiation ceremonies in which father figures circumcize their adolescent sons as sources of deep castration anxiety. Yet, he points out, these (preliterate) adolescents "know a very different childhood from that of the analyst's patients . . ." (p. 74).

These three writers offer various remedies for this scientifically intolerable confusion of emphatic utterances with established facts. The two anthropologists demonstrate what can be done by thorough and meticulous field work to provide adequate empirical data for analysis; and one of them Richards, uses her findings for a reassessment of theory. The psycho-analyst, though inheriting the speculative tendencies of his forbears, nevertheless shows a healthy independence of dogma.

The three authors vary in the distribution of their interest between building theories and reporting facts. At one extreme is Bettelheim whose work represents new insights obtained

[1]H.A. Murray, "Techniques for a Systematic Investigation of Fantasy", *Journal of Psychology*, 3, 1936, p. 133.

from a fresh approach to existing and often well-known material. For instance, in testing his hypotheses regarding initiation, he takes the commendable step of using the Australian material that stimulated Freud's contribution to the subject, thus meeting Freud on his own ground. At the other extreme is Wilson who devotes herself almost entirely to the detailed recording of new empirical data on ritual—"observation or description of events, and statements about associations" (p. 7) and who, when she systematizes her facts (as in her last two chapters), does so with the aim of clarifying the local picture rather than contributing to comparative theory. While making some minor reservations, she finds the theoretical propositions originating with Radcliffe-Brown a satisfactory frame of reference for her data on Nyakyusa ritual. It should be noted at this point that Wilson, unlike the other two authors discussed, does not confine herself to puberty rituals but deals with all those celebrated by kinsmen, including those of birth, death and misfortune. She leaves communal rituals for consideration in another volume.

Richards occupies a middle position. Her ethnography, like Wilson's, is exemplary in its thoroughness and detail, but, concentrating as she does on describing and analysing a single girl's initiation ceremony, she is able to devote more attention to comparative theory; and she puts forward a number of stimulating suggestions about alternatives to some of the well-worn hypotheses regarding the social functions of ritual, especially puberty ritual. Both these anthropologists, who have collected their data with great thoroughness and skill, are especially well qualified to adjust the theoretical framework to which these data apply, a framework which, as Richards remarks (p. 21), has not seen extensive revision since the early years of this century. One therefore cannot help wishing that Richards had been a little more systematic in her attempts at reform, and Wilson a little less cautious in making statements of general application. It would be an understatement to say that previous writers have made general speculations on the basis of flimsier empirical data. One hopes that Wilson, when she has completed her second volume on Nyakyusa ritual, will use the fruits of her unique acquaintance with ritual in its social context (acquired during the tireless, intensive field work she and her late husband carried out) in contributing to the development of comparative sociological theory.

Each of the three books has a distinctive message. Bettelheim's provides the first satisfactory psycho-analytical substitute for Freud's typically speculative hypothesis that "Circumcision is the symbolical substitute for castration, a punishment which the primeval father dealt his sons long ago out of the fullness of his power; and whosoever accepted this symbol showed by so doing that he was ready to submit to the father's will, although it was at the cost of a painful sacrifice" (*Moses and Monotheism*, p. 192, cited by Bettelheim on p. 47); that initiation ceremonies result from the father's jealousy of their sons; and that their purpose is to create sexual (castration) anxiety, thus making the incest taboo secure (p. 17).

Bettelheim feels that another of Freud's suggestions was far worthier of the elaboration he devoted to this fantastic, Lamarckian-tainted, "just-so story" "accounting for" the resolution of the Oedipus complex. This was the idea that it is not until puberty that the sharp distinction between the male and female character is established (p. 18), and that the "polymorphous-perverse disposition" on which this uncertainty is based has its origin in early (pre-Oedipal) childhood (p. 42). It is upon this foundation that Bethlehem builds an interesting interpretation which, though unlikely to be accepted unreservedly by anyone other than a neo-psycho-analyst, nevertheless contains some highly plausible hypotheses. He is, for instance, very much in accord with anthropological thinking when he contends (pp. 105 ff.) that initiation rites should be viewed within the context of fertility rites and may be regarded as promoting and symbolizing full acceptance of the socially prescribed sexual role.

Neither of these notions is new, but Bettelheim brings new support for them. Stimulated by his own clinical observations, he feels that there is much evidence not only for females wishing they were males (the well known "penis envy" of psycho-analytical jargon) but also for males wishing they were females. He suggest that the latter (what may be called "vagina envy") has in the past been hidden by the attitude of male superiority that have dominated psycho-analysis; and he feels that a lessening of them "may indicate how much more that is feminine exists in men than is generally believed" (p. 22). If we accept the idea that children are polymorphous in general[1] and sexually ambiverse in particular, there is much to be said for an hypothesis that regards initiation ceremonies as promoting and symbolizing the final choice of the anatomically destined role and the final renunciation of the opposite one. An interesting "exception that proves the rule" is the instance of those Omaha adolescents who, as a result of dreaming (during the puberty ritual) of the symbol associated with the sex to which they do not belong, are required thenceforth to live as members of that sex, though physically they do not belong to it (p. 109). Bettelheim's argument is less clear when he tries to demonstrate a connection between the male desire to be female (symbolized among the Australians, he claims, by the vulva-like mutilation known as sub-incision) and the widely acknowledged fact that initiation rituals are often associated with fertility cults.

Some of his other hypotheses flow with varying degrees of credibility from his discovery of the hitherto glossed-over tendency for men to envy women's reproductive apparatus and power. Two related ones are that one of the functions of male initiation may be to assert that men, too, can bear children; and that circumcision, particularly in societies where the male contribution to procreation is understood, is a magical genital manipulation by which a wound symbolic of male procreative power is inflicted. And from these two there flows a third, that doubts about the efficacy of magical manipulations such as circumcision and sub-incision drove men to surround their puberty rituals with great secrecy. The reasoning involved in the derivation of this hypothesis and in the one that regards male genital mutilation as a means of simulating female genital bleeding (either to satisfy man's desire for women's procreative power or to avenge women's "penis envy") is, in the reviewer's opinion, getting rather near the limits of normal (as opposed to psycho-analytical) credibility.

Bettelheim's book is refreshingly different from the general run of the older psycho-analytic writing. By being ego- rather than id-oriented, it concentrates on man's active attempts at adjusting himself to live problems, such as committing himself to playing a chosen or unavoidable role, rather than on an imputed sublimation or perversion of instinctive libido. Although the author lapses occasionally into an evolutionist frame of reference (e.g. on p. 114), he is anthropologically well informed and does not show any marked tendency to select his material to prove his hypotheses. He makes the interesting point that while he accepts the basic premise of functionalist anthropology he finds it too rational. This book serves to remind us that psycho-analysis, provided we remember that it is nothing more than a conceptual demonology,[2] may have some of the answers to problems concerning the "origin" and recurrence of institutions in the polymorphous matrix of infantile behaviour[3].

Symbolic Wounds is unfortunately one of those irritating books in which one has to look for footnotes at the end, where, even if one's search

[1]Lévi-Strauss has recently revived the old idea of "physic unity" by attributing the universality of certain forms of social structure such as dual organization to the fact that infantile thinking is a polymorphous matrix from which various cultural possibilities develop. C. Lévi-Strauss, *Les Structures Elémentaires de la Parenté*, cited by J. P. B. de Josselin de Jong, *Lévi-Strauss's Theory on Kinship and Marriage*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1952, p. 8.

[2]I owe the term "demonology" to Professor O. C. Jensen who (in a private communication) described the psychoanalytic conception of man's behaviour as the outcome of the warring activities of the devils, Ego, Id and Super-Ego, that possess him.

[3]See the reference to Lévi-Strauss in footnote 1.

is successful, the probability of being confronted by a tortuous if not false trail in an *op cit.*, *loc. cit.* or *ibid.* is high. On p. 159 there is a reference to "the Kikuyu of *western* Africa" (italics added)

The message of Richard's book, if somewhat scattered, is highly stimulating. It calls on anthropologists to examine some of the assumptions they have been in the habit of making regarding the social functions of ritual. For instance, though she accepts the basic hypothesis originating in Durkheim and Radcliffe-Brown that the function of ritual is to promote group cohesion, she feels that "later observations have shown that important ceremonials are just as often occasions of group division as of union" (p. 117), a viewpoint amply supported by Srinivas's study of the Coorgs.[1]

Furthermore, Richards questions the emphasis that is usually placed on the educational functions of initiation rituals. She shows that among the Bemba, although the women claimed to be teaching the neophytes "how to bear and bring up children, to cook, act as housewife, and garden" (p. 126), the conditions prevailing during the ceremony were not conducive to their learning these activities; nor were they, in fact, activities they needed to be taught, since they had formed part of their everyday experience. The educational functions of initiation would appear to be, rather, the subtle modification of attitudes. To Richard's (and here the inspiration of Malinowski, to whose memory the book is dedicated, is apparent) the most striking aspect of the ritual was the fact that the women in charge of the ceremony believed "they were causing supernatural changes to take place in the girls under their care, as well as marking these changes. They were changing an alarming condition to a safe one and securing the transition from a calm but unproductive girlhood to a potentially dangerous but fertile womanhood. They were making the girls grow as well as teaching them" (p. 125). She regards as especially important the magical tests, like the teasing of the girls, that are applied from time to time to check their progress. These "reflect the anxiety of parents and relatives as to whether the candidates really are grown up or socially fit for married life, as well as the recognition of the society that a change of status has occurred" (p. 123).

A valuable part of Richard's book is her classification (pp. 52 ff.) of Bantu puberty ritual into (*a*) puberty ritual proper; (*b*) nubility ritual and fertility cults; (*c*) puberty ritual associated with initiation into age-grades; (*d*) puberty ritual linked with the joining of special associations; and (*e*) maturation rites unassociated with puberty. In terms of this scheme she classifies the Bemba girl's initiation as a nubility rite preceded by a short puberty ceremony proper.

Richards adds to the readability of her book by writing in a personal vein, and she displays an admirable scientific integrity in the way she takes the reader into her confidence regarding the conditions under which she worked—witness the following passages:

> "The psychologist studying symbolic behaviour, or the linguist interested in the ritual use of language, needs to know the whole system of symbols used if he is to draw deductions from the material. I have, therefore, given all the song and mime data I have. Moreover, I I have thought it necessary to add to the straightforward description an eye-witness account of the behaviour of the people concerned. How did the people look, dance and speak? Which parts of the ceremony seemed to fill them with fear, excitement, boredom or a feeling of awe? What were the comments made and the views held? This is an addition to detail already wearisomely full, but I believe it adds rather than subtracts from its interest. In spite of the mass of literature on primitive ritual that exists, it is extraordinary how few of the accounts we have, give a clear idea of the feeling-tone of the actors engaged. This places a duty on those who have had the fortune to witness a long ceremony to record their impression of it fully. Without such detail, it is impossible to study the function of a

[1] M. N. Srinivas, *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952.

ceremony in a particular culture or of ritual as a whole" (pp. 55-56).

". . . It is hardly possible for one field worker to get all the relevant material in a ceremony of this kind. There is the difficulty of taking photographs and simultaneously writing notes during rites that take place in bush and village and on the road between the two. There is also the factor of exhaustion. Songs and dances often went on until two and three in the morning. On such occasions the company is usually elated by beer and accustomed to the heat of a small hut about eight feet in diameter filled with twenty or thirty people and an enormous fire. The observer is dead sober, nearly stifled, with eyes running from the smoke, and straining all the time to catch the words from the songs screeched around her, and to transcribe them by the firelight that penetrates occasionally through the mass of human limbs" (p. 62).

"It was now about half-past one at night. The excitement had fizzled out. Bickering and shouting began and the beer was served out. The smoke in the hut was thick. Women were streaming with sweat and the two girls lay exhausted on the floor. Nevertheless the drums and the singing went on sporadically throughout the rest of the night. I slipped out of the hut at about half-past two, no longer able to write. The company stayed, still watching for the dawn. . . .

. "I was called just after 4 a.m. The first cock had crowed. It was the signal for the final rite of the killing of the chickens. . . ." (p. 107).

The message of Wilson's book concerns technique rather than any other aspect; and the success of the technique employed by the two investigators is shown in the emergence of probably the most detailed and certainly the most convincing study yet made of the symbolic pattern of a tribe. The Wilsons rightly believed that the people who could best interpret Nyakyusa rituals were the Nyakyusa themselves, and that in general, as Monica Wilson puts it, "It seems probably that certain symbols are universal in the sense that they express the same ideas in all societies. Many other symbols are emotionally intelligible when interpreted—the following pages are full of examples—but it is foolish to imagine that an individual schooled in one culture can understand the symbolism of another without instruction" (p. 6). For this reason she gives frequent quotations from explanatory statements that were painstakingly elicited from carefully selected, knowledgeable informants. She expresses it as her business "to lay bare the symbolic pattern of the Nyakyusa without reference to the Western tradition" (p.7).

Any manual that shows, whether by precept or example, how to carry out investigations must define the objects and processes to be investigated. This one, which is based on example rather than precept, has some useful definitions and clarifications of the term "ritual". Thus:

"We proceed on the assumption that men express in ritual what moves them most; that the form of expression is conventional and obligatory, and that therefore in ritual the values of a group (as opposed to those of individuals) are revealed.

"By *ritual* we mean a primarily religious action, that is, action directed to securing the blessing of some mystical power or powers. The action may be a negative, i.e. an avoidance or taboo, as well as a positive one. Symbols and concepts are employed in rituals but are subordinated to practical ends. Ritual is distinguished from *ceremonial*, which is an elaborate conventional form for the expression of feeling, not confined to religious occasions; any emotional situation, whether religious or secular, may be clothed in ceremony, and a ceremony is an appropriate and elaborate form for the expression of feeling; but a ritual is action believed to be efficacious. Confusion between the two arises in our own society, for what is ritual to some (e.g. a rite of baptism or marriage) is but ceremonial to others. In Nyakyusa society the distinction is fairly clear cut. . . ." (p. 9).

Although the Nyakyusa say in ultimate explanation of their rituals that these are customary or

established in the nature of the universe, the Wilsons succeeded in revealing their symbolism, thus discovering their more immediate motivation. Occasionally they encountered differences of opinion among their informants, and justifiably assumed that the symbol in question had two referents, was "over-determined" in the Freudian sense. Nevertheless the Nyakyusa seem in general to be remarkably clear about the significance of their ritual actions; and the advantage of this book in contrast to many in both psycho-analysis and social anthropology, is that when a symbolic interpretation is made, it is supported by a wealth of informants' "associations".

Since puberty rituals are the exclusive concern of the other two books reviewed, it is of interest to record the main elements of the Nyakyusa ritual of puberty and marriage and to note some of the symbols that are used, together with what they mean to the Nyakyusa. Unfortunately for our purposes "there is no circumcision or initiation of men other than the 'coming out' ceremony, when a whole generation takes over responsibility for the administration and defence of the chiefdom from their fathers" (p. 4); and we are concerned here with the puberty ritual for girls, which is fused with the marriage ritual. The main elements of this dual ritual are "the seclusion of the bride and avoidance of her fathers and brothers, the laying of a ritual litter, the meeting of maids and young men on the litter, the avoidance of water, the treatment with *ikipiki* medicine, shaving and ceremonial purification, the instruction, the celebration of maturity and virginity by the exchange of feasts between the bride's parents and those of the groom, the slaughter of the bull of virginity provided by her husband, and the taking of a fowl to her mother after first intercourse. . . . The overt purpose of the ritual is . . . that the girl may be fertile, and healthy in mind and body" (p. 118).

Among the many symbols used in the ritual so briefly summarized, the following are of interest. The *undumila* medicine, the first to be used at the onset of the girl's first menstruation, is a symbol of sexual intercourse and thus regarded as "a prophylactic against pain in intercourse, frequent or painful periods and injury from those who are 'heavy' [i.e., women ritually impure from being sexually active]" (p. 102). Another medicine *ikipiki*, used on a number of occasions of ritual washing, symbolizes the virility of a lineage. "To provide it or to use it is to acknowledge agnatic kinship: husband and wife wash with it together in acknowledgement that the wife is now 'one blood' with her husband" (p. 207). Shaving and the clearing of the litter symbolize purification (p. 106). The slaughter of the bull is both the celebration of a girl's virginity and a sacrifice to the shades to make her fertile (p. 111). The belief that the shades are present in intercourse and control conception affects the ritual of puberty and marriage in that an offering of meat is made to the shades of the bride's lineage that they may "move aside a little" so that she may conceive; and in that the bride herself becomes dangerous to her mother, and has to make her a ritual present of a fowl to remove the danger, because she has mingled her blood with that of another lineage by having intercourse with her husband.

The general framework of all the Nyakyusa rituals of kinship consists of "the *induction* with a formal laying of the litter of banana leaves in a hut into which the participant is brought to live apart from other people; the retreat or *seclusion* during which he lives and eats apart and is regarded as filthy, for he is 'brooded over' by the shades; and the *bringing out* when the shades are driven away and he is purified" (p. 203). This sequence Wilson interprets as symbolic of death and rebirth; the middle period, that of seclusion, overlaps the two referents and thus means both death and gestation.

An interesting point of difference that this study reveals is the fact that "The aim of Nyakyusa ritual is not that union with God constantly sought in Christian ritual, but a separation both from the shades and the heroes; for close association with the pagan gods spells madness and death, not fullness of life" (p. 204).

As we saw earlier, Wilson's book is a contribution to ethnography rather than to comparative theory. Nevertheless in a few of her asides and in her final chapter she makes some points of general interest. For instance on p. 25, in reference to burial rites, she makes a statement similar to Richards's, that ceremonials are just as often occasions of group division as of union (see above, p. 184). "So far from rituals having the sole function of promoting social integration, as some would have us believe, the burial rites of the Nyakyusa were occasions on which existing antipathies continually found overt expression in fighting and new antipathies arose . . ." The fact that the study includes the comparison of two areas differing slightly in culture makes it possible for her to record (pp. 11-12) that, though variations in ritual practices occur, the values and attitudes expressed are identical. "Thus the commonly accepted idea that ritual forms are more stable than the interpretation of symbolism does not hold for the Nyakyusa".

In her final chapter Wilson shows that in Nyakyusa material there is ample support for the idea that rituals symbolize structural relationships, in this case the differentiation and the unity of agnatic lineages (p. 222); that they certainly compel outward conformity to an approved system of co-operation and respect and probably penetrate in varying degrees to the realm of individual attitudes (pp. 226-27); that they "provide for the public expression of anti-social attitudes or tendencies, and their public rejection. . . . Rituals are both affirmative and cathartic: they express certain attitudes and make explicit and reject others" (pp. 227-28); and that they sustain social values by sacralizing the means of subsistence and those sentiments and attitudes that are necessary for harmonious social living.

The three studies reviewed will prove to be indispensable to anyone undertaking field work involving the study of ritual. Bettelheim's will widen his horizons; Richards's, question his assumptions; and Wilson's, show him how field work should be done.

M. G. MARWICK

Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885. K. O. DIKE. Oxford University Press, 1956. vii+250 pp., map. 30s.

The author of this book is an historian writing about the Oil Rivers, a region with which I am well acquainted. He shows not only erudition and research but also scholarship and has a good critical faculty. His approach is highly objective and furthermore he has a pleasing and attractive style. One is kindly suspicious that he has a partiality for the Ibo, but of this suspicion only those who know the terrain would become aware.

Dr Dike opens his narrative by pointing out that the flag followed trade, or, because the duty on Holland's Square Face Schnapps was for many years the principal source of revenue, one might say facetiously that the flag followed the flagon. Karl Marx's theory of economic determinism is well supported by this book. The economics of slavery were quite different from those of the palm-oil trade. The navy interfered in legitimate trade to enforce the payments of debts to British merchants, whereas the trade in palm-oil was the cause of the appointment of John Beecroft, a merchant, as the first British Consul. Thereafter followed the rather futile, powerless Courts of Equity which were replaced as trade grew first by magistrates' courts and finally by the creation of protectorates and a full judiciary. Laird with his vision of inland trade was responsible for the change from monopoly to free trade.

Dr Dike draws attention to the report of the Select Committee of 1865 on the trade of West Africa. "All contemporary evidence showed that the greatest volume of British trade was done in that part of west Africa (the Niger Delta) where 'we have no Government agents, forts or settlements.' The Free Traders attributed this state of affairs to the competition which has always existed in the Delta trade and its 'Freedom as yet from all extraneous interference'" This happy state of affairs should be compared with that revealed in Norman Ley's book *Kenya*, London, 1925, where on page 187

he writes: "This principle, that it is the duty of the Government to induce Africans to transfer their productive energies from land of their own to land belonging to Europeans was made palatable to public opinion by three assumptions rather than arguments. One of them—that working for Europeans would be educative to Africans—is partly, of course, true. It certainly is not true without qualification. The second was the assumption that work under European masters would produce more wealth than could otherwise be produced. West African experience has disproved that assumption."

Dr Dike rightly points out that no study has been made of the African middle-men in the days of the nefarious slave trade. It would appear that it is too late now to undertake such a study, yet the names of "Houses" in the slave trading days persist to the present day as a perusal of the "Minutes of Evidence on the Slave Trade" given in both houses of Parliament show. On page 37 Dr Dike remarks that the "House System" was "in a large measure beneficial to all". When it is realized that it was necessary to create the local "House Rule Ordinance" in order to make legal the capture of runaway members of the House, one realizes that Dr Dike's remark is inaccurate because if such fugitives were few it would be unnecessary to create such a law. This law was revoked on the grounds that it perpetuated slavery.

I drew attention, more than twenty years ago, to the fact that the "House System" was the response of the middle-man to the African slave trade. These houses started by being slave barracoons owned by middle-men, and when I first arrived at Calabar many of the old Calabar houses were still built on this principle; so were those of Bonny and Opobo, and moreover they bore such names as Ephraim and Duke at Calabar, or Fubra and Pepple at Bonny. These two settlements of Calabar and of Bonny, consisted of a number of barracoons or "Houses" clustered together at slave depot ports. These "Houses" were often rivals of each other, even to the extent of fighting and destroying each other, yet Dike euphemistically likens them to the Greek city states and refers to them as "city states", e.g. the city state of Old Calabar. This description gives an entirely false picture of these settlements.

The statement that Mina was a term used for the Gold Coast is correct. The name derives from that of a local tribe called Mina or Amina, on whose territory the Portuguese in 1482 built their first fort, that of São Jorge da Mina, now known as El Mina and today wrongly translated as "The Mine".

Dr Dike (p. 23) writes: "It was during the era of traffic in human beings that the Delta gained the bulk of its population". This is a very doubtful assertion. If this statement refers to the development of Brass, Akassa, Bonny, Okrika, New Calabar and Old Calabar, it is correct; but to infer that the Ibibio, Andoni, Ijaw, and Ibo tribes, now numbering many millions, came into existence as a result of the slave trade is, as any reading of the early voyagers will show, to misapprehend the situation entirely. There are no traditions of migrations among either the Ibo or the Ibibio.

The statement on page 40 that the Obinkito quarter of Aro-Chuku traded with Bonny is open to question. The Ibibio were the people over whom the Obinkito quarter had their sphere of influence. Also there was a direct canoe communication from near Aro-Chuku down the Cross River with Old Calabar on its estuary. Furthermore, on the left bank of the Cross River, but well inland, I was shown the old slave road from Aro-Chuku to Creek Town just above Old Calabar, so that Old Calabar rather than Bonny was the slave depot for Aro-Chuku. Dike does not mention the literature on slave raiding that was constantly indulged in along the creeks and waterways.[1]

The statement that "comey" was instituted for fostering trade in the Hinterland is not quite correct. Thus in the *Nigerian Law Reports*, Vol. I, Lagos 1915, p. 137, is the record:" We find then by the treaty of 1856 the Kings and Chiefs of Brass received comey and in considera-

[1]See Jeffreys, M. D. W.: "Alt Kalabar und der Sklaven-handel", *Paideuma*, Heft I, Band VI, Nov., 1954, pp. 14-24.

tion of this they were amongst other things (1) to abandon slave traffic and to confine themselves to legitimate trade, (2) to give water in the pilots town, Twon, and (3) to grant land for the erection of houses and stores. . . ."

Dr Dike discusses political units, without defining what is political. Is a family, or kindred, or clan, a political unit? One does not expect such inaccuracy from a scholar.

The muddle and vacillations over treaty making at Bonny described on p. 86 come as an unpleasant surprise. Dr Dike is to be congratulated on the amount of information he has dug out of the Foreign Office archives. On p. 129 Dr Dike mentions that in September 1851 Consul Beecroft was asked by the Old Calabar supercargoes to settle a dispute between the Omun and Acoona-Coona peoples. If this dispute was a boundary dispute over land it was still unsettled eighty years later.

In the treaty reproduced on page 221, article No. 8 has been omitted. Was it Ibo squeamishness that prompted this omission? Article 8 reads: "Each party, viz. the Andony and Bonny mutually agree and bind themselves, that for the future they will not eat human flesh." Dike regards this treaty as evidence of the annexation of the Andonis (p. 98). My own conclusions, embodied in my *Andoni Report of* 1930, now in the Residency at Calabar, run as follows: "Reading between the lines, this treaty is an attempt, on paper, to make the Andoni tribe appear as vassals of the Bonny people, but the general wording so far from being that of unconditional surrender . . . is one of alliance and mutual support, and was made to put an end to hostilities that had begun some ten years earlier. From Baikie's account this treaty was of no avail, for he mentions war starting again in 1848 or 1849. The people of Bonny, New Calabar and Andony were represented as most barbarous tribes, even as cannibals. King Pepple said: 'Them eat we; what for we no eat them too?' This quotation bears out the contention that the Andonis were independent of the Bonny people."

The most serious criticism of Dr Dike's narrative is his account of the rise of Jaja. He remarks (p. 225): "Thus at Bonny I found that the account given me of the Jaja revolution varied greatly from that which I received from Opobo sources". I may add the Andoni account is also very different from that of Dr Dike's narrative. Continuing from my Andoni report, I wrote: "That the Andonis were not subjects of the Bonny is shown by their behaviour when civil war broke out in Bonny in 1869. Jaja was driven out and was a refugee. . . . He tried to take shelter first with the New Calabars who refused him help and then with the Ogonis who likewise declined to offer him assistance. His reason for not seeking refuge at once among the Andoni was that he was on bad terms with them. In other words the centuries-old feud still smouldered.

"Before the Andoni would assist Jaja he had to make obeisance to them and was taken before the Andoni shrine of Nyo Bulo at Alabie where a ram and a slave were sacrificed and eaten before this shrine. Thereafter the Andonis turned out their war canoes and stopped the Bonny canoes from pursuing Jaja."

Dr Dike mentions a marble statue to King Jaja in Opobo town. This statue was unveiled in the last quarter of 1907. Dr Dike omits to mention the cost of this statue, some £2,000, most of which was subscribed by the European firms.

Why the Imo River on which Opobo town is situated is called the Ikomtoro River is not explained.

Dr Dike states (p. 107) that cowries were introduced into Nigeria early in the nineteenth century. He quotes "*McPhee, op cit.*, p. 234", as his authority. There is no other reference to McPhee so that I am unable to check up on him. In any case this statement that cowries first arrived in Nigeria early in the nineteenth century is quite wrong.[1]

[1]Jeffreys, M. D. W.: "The Diffusion of Cowries and Egyptian Culture in Africa", *American Anthropologist*, 50, 1, Jan.-Mar., 1948, pp. 45-53

An important criticism of the book is that very little attention is given to the peoples of the western delta, Brass for instance, and the western Ijaw, the Jekri and the Warri peoples. The claim that the kings of Bonny belonged to the class known as divine kings is nowhere substantiated by Dr Dike and the general history and rise of Bonny preclude this possibility.

There are a few printer's errors: p. 61, footnote, *secretary* is wrongly spelt; p. 145, *conning* should be *cunning;*, p. 156, *Calobar* should be *Calabar;* footnote, *or* should be *for;* p. 225, *pulling* should be *putting*. On p. 19 there is a footnote "See map at end", but there is no map there. Instead it faces page 19.

This is an excellent book and will appeal to coasters, ethnologists and historians. I look forward to further historical accounts of west Africa from the pen of Dr Dike who, I am informed, is in charge of the historical and archaeological investigations at Benin.

M. D. W. JEFFREYS

Nigerian Cocoa Farmers. R. GALLETTI, K. D. S. BALDWIN, and I. O. DINA. Oxford University Press, London. 1956. xxxix+744 pp., 5 maps, 33 figs., 309 tables+LX Appendix tables. £5 5s.

In 1950 the Nigerian Cocoa Marketing Board appointed a research team to investigate the economics of cocoa farming. Its terms of reference were wide and covered many aspects of the life of the cocoa farmer. They included, amongst others, a study of the methods and of the costs of cocoa farming and other occupations in which the farmer and his family participated, a study of family incomes, and an enquiry into expenditure and indebtedness. Such comprehensive terms of reference would be formidable enough but the research was made more difficult because the field chosen was extensive, covering the cocoa-producing areas in Western Nigeria, a belt some 250 miles in length and up to 50 miles in width.

Perhaps it was the initial grant of £25,000 which encouraged the authors to embark upon such an ambitious programme with optimism. From an estimated total of 180,000 cocoa farmers it was proposed to make a detailed census of 900 families in 24 selected villages which were scattered over the entire cocoa belt. This census included a full inventory of possessions and property owned by the families. No information, however, was available on the size, structure, and operations of cocoa farms within this 'universe' and consequently the families selected were not chosen on the basis of a random or stratified sample. The families chosen for further detailed study were selected for mainly practical reasons depending on the convenience of their locality and on their willingness to co-operate. 350 such families were chosen but when the records were examined it was found that only 187 of them, scattered throughout 19 villages, were acceptable for statistical analysis. The results of the records collected about these families form much of the material of this book.

Records were taken for a complete year, 1951-52. They included for each family, its possessions, property, borrowings, loans and investments, its sources of income and its methods of earning income. Every two or three days records were also taken of the production, consumption, sales, cash income and expenditure of each person.

A great wealth of detailed information emerges from the analysis of these records and this will undoubtedly make the book a standard reference for many years.

It would be interesting to compare the standards of the African farmer in Nigeria with his counterpart in South Africa. During the year of the survey the average Nigerian cocoa farmer worked 1,000 hours, an equivalent of 125 days at eight hours per day. This amount of work afforded a daily food intake averaging 3,000 calories per adult male, an annual consumption of 76 gallons of palm wine and 200 cigarettes per family, adequate housing, and clothing with £150 per family. (Price levels of clothes are approximately equal to those in South

Africa, though clothes are much less of a necessity.) The study of price incentives on production was outside the scope of this work, but it well establishes the fact that the Nigerian cocoa farmer places a high value on his leisure, requiring many days and sometimes weeks of idleness and festivity during the year.

The large volume which describes the information in detail is over 780 pages in length and contains some 360 tables. Some of these tables, however, are not only confusing but also give a misleading picture of the facts recorded. For example, in Chapter 12, which is entitled "Incomes", are analyzed the incomes of 187 families according to sources of income such as farming, home industry, and trade. But in nearly all the tables in this chapter the analysis is made of either the average family or the families in total. It is not until tables 240 and 241, which give distribution and ranges of incomes, are reached, that the value of the previous tables can be assessed. Table 241 gives a mean income of £159 and a median income of £105 per annum, but table 240 shows that, whilst over one third of the families had a total income of less than £60 per annum, six families had over £500 and three families had over £1,000 per annum. Such extremes mean that the previous tables in which the total and average incomes are used are misleading. When one examines the Appendix table LII, the sources from which families with incomes greater than £500 per annum derive their incomes, it is surprising to find that nearly 77 per cent of their incomes, or a total of £5,100, came from trading and only 22 per cent from farming. It is not made clear what sort of trade these families undertook, whether it was in cocoa or in food crops. Furthermore, there is no indication of the areas in which these families lived. This is a great pity because many of the tables are analyzed according to areas, and families with an exceptionally high income from one source, are, unless they are representative of that area, bound to give an erroneous picture of the structure of its economy.

Because of the wide range of incomes, the material given in certain tables in other chapters is also misleading, particularly in the chapters dealing with Consumption and Expenditure, Indebtedness, and Family Accounts. In a survey which covers only 187 families it should be possible to describe the exceptional families as case histories. This would have been particularly valuable for the wealthier families who may have had important influences on the community which could not be shown adequately in the statistical tables.

In criticizing this work one must consider the imponderable difficulties of undertaking research such as this which was not only intensive in detail but also extensive in the field. Communications between rural communities in West Africa are difficult and transport is costly in time and money. It is difficult to recruit suitable field workers. As most families are illiterate, the field assistant has to record all the relevant information himself. He has to be most searching, persistent and patient in his enquiries and unless he understands the nature and importance of his work, then inaccuracy, incompleteness and inconsistency are bound to occur in his records. Inexperienced field workers need constant supervision and when one considers this in relation to the large area over which the survey extended it is hardly surprising that the final cost of the work proved to be £75,000.

Until more conscientious and experienced field workers are available, and until more accurate information is obtainable on the structure of the "universe" which forms the subject of a piece of research, so that samples can be obtained which reasonably represent that "universe", it might be wiser to limit economic and social surveys to one clearly defined locality rather than to study an extensive, not necessarily representative, and arbitrarily selected field. The intensive study can yield much valuable information; careful day-to-day supervision is possible; co-operation with informants is simplified and a high degree of accuracy is obtainable. It is true that the intensive study of one locality may not give results which are

representative of a wider area, but then neither does the study under review, as the authors admit (p. xxv). At least the intensive, highly localized survey can be done fairly accurately, with a much smaller amount of labour, and with cheaper and more efficient supervision.

ROWENA M. LAWSON

Linguistic Survey of the Northern Bantu Borderland, Vol. I. By RESEARCH TEAMS. International African Institute (O.U.P.), London. 1956. 146 pp. (3 maps in folder). 32s. 6d.

This volume contains an account of the survey of the area of the "Bantu Line" across Africa, by two research teams, together with additional material supplied by Professor A. N. Tucker and Miss M. A. Bryan, dealing with the territory from the Great Lakes to the Indian Ocean. The research was a co-operative effort of the British, French and Belgian administrations, to help to unravel the complexity of languages throughout this area.

Part I (pp. 9-62) deals with the stretch from the Atlantic coast to the Oubangui. The research team consisted of A. Jacquot (French) and I. Richardson (British). The material is divided into three sections, Bantu, Bantoid and Non-Bantu, respectively, the divisions being made solely on linguistic principles. The term Semi-Bantu has been discarded. A large number of linguistic names and types, nearly 180, is listed. Divisions and sub-divisions of a great number of these are given, and inter-relationships referred to. No appraisement of this part of the work is, of course, possible, as the material upon which the classifications are based has yet to be published.

Part II (pp. 63-122) deals with the stretch from the Oubangui to the Nile. For this the team consisted of Père G. Van Bulck (Belgian) and E. Hackett (British). The investigators report that their investigations covered 438 languages and dialects! Roughly the main groupings are into Bantu, Sudanic, Nilotic and Nilo-Hamitic, while Pygmy groups are also included. Here is indication of a vast and bewildering amount of material. The main groupings are probably quite reliable; but, as with the previous area (Part I), the data and criteria for the suggested detailed classification are not yet published. The magnitude of the task can be appreciated from the following quotation (p. 68):

> "The complete documentation will require at least two years of preparation before it can be published, and will comprise 30 sections, of which 16 deal with Bantu grammar, 1 with Nilotic, 1 with Nilo-Hamitic, 10 with Sudanic, and 2 with Bantoid. This work would be completed by 10 further sections, in which Professor Van Bulck will publish the linguistic material he has collected on the languages and dialects of the Tchad Territory."

Part III (pp. 123-146) is additional to the work of the two field teams, and is designed to bring the survey from the Great Lakes to the Eastern Coast. The material here is much more condensed than that in the other two sections; it is the result of collating and assessing extant published material. Bantu, "Partly Bantu" and Non-Bantu languages are covered in this survey. In this most interesting linguistic area (of Uganda, Kenya and Northern Tanganyika), among the Non-Bantu are found *inter alia* Nilotic, Nilo-Hamitic, Cushitic and even Click-languages (Sandawe and Hadza) showing affinity to South African Hottentot and Bushman.

A note is given on page 130 on the term "Bantu Kavirondo". It is best to drop this term altogether, as it is considered insulting by the Africans themselves. Three extremely good maps are given in a pocket at the back of the book. They indicate the detailed work that has gone into this publication.

This is but Volume I of a series of four volumes planned for this Northern Borderland area. The other volumes of Linguistic Analyses should prove of absorbing interest to African Language students.

C.M.D.

Inleiding tot de studie van de Kongolese Bantoetalen. AMAAT BURSSENS. Kongo-Overzee Bibliotheek VIII. De Sikkel, Antwerpen. 1954. xxii+151 bladsye; kaarte en figure.

Luidens die voorwoord het die *Inleiding*, waarvan reeds eerder 'n Franse uitgawe verskyn het, sy ontstaan te danke aan 'n voorstel van bepaalde instansies om 'n handleiding vir studente van die „Koloniale School" op te stel. Oorwegings van omvang het die outeur laat besluit om hom alleen by vier Bantoetale te bepaal, en sy keuse van ciLuba, Mongo, Swahili en liNgala word duidelik en oortuigend gemotiveer. Die verdere oorweging dat ook tale anders as Bantoetale vir die betrokke gebied van belang is, het die skrywer beweeg om minstens 'n vlugtige oorsig van hulle besondere verband, en daardeur van die grotere taalgroeperinge in Afrika, by te voeg. Ruimte word ook afgestaan vir 'n bespreking van die belangrikste verkeerstale, die ontaarding en vereenvoudiging van spesifieke taalvorms in die proses van hulle bruikbaarmaking as algemene omgangstale, en die omstandighede waaronder sekere dialekte besig is om hulle beslag as kultuurtale te kry, of alreeds gekry het. Voeg hieraan toe dat ook 'n beskrywing van die spraakklanke en van prosodiese elemente nie agterweë kon bly nie, en dit word begryplik waarom prof. Burssens terwille van die breër opset sy uiteensettings so kort moontlik moes hou. Ons wil dit hieraan toeskryf dat soms taalverskynsels van ingrypende belang, soos die van vokaalharmonie, alleen in die verbygaan instede van sistematies behandel word.

By die grammatiese ontleding en vergelyking word die kenner veral sterk onder die indruk gebring van die behoefte aan meer onderlinge raadpleging sodat deskundiges groter eenstemmigheid kan verkry ten opsigte van essensiele vakterminologie, en ook sodat bestaande leemtes beter gevul kan word. Ten opsigte van die werkwoord, wat in die onderhawige geval nogal besonder uitvoerig behandel is, geld dit in 'n minder mate van afgeleide werkwoorde as van werkwoordtye waar die gebrek aan geskikte nomenklatuur sterker voor die dag tree. So gebruik die skrywer vir die vorm op *-ile*, wat volgens sy insig die handeling in sy werklikheid sonder meer aandui, die minder gelukkige term *constatatief* (§204). 'n Tydvorm wat te kenne gee dat die handeling of toestand voortduur (§212), dus retrospektiwiteit insluit, bly ongenoem, en hier is *persistief* wel duidelik die aangewese benaming. Opvallend is verder dat die term *kopula* gebruik word in verband met *li*, terwyl *ni* bloot as predikatiewe element aangemerk staan. Laasgenoemde word dan wel vertaal met *het is*, *het zyn*, owerigens ook *ndi* (§§ 127, 168). Ten opsigte van possessiewe word deur onderverdeling 'n nuwe weg ingeslaan; daarvolgens word die bestaande term gereserveer vir gevalle waar 'n sodanige bepaling reeds 'n volle woord, meesal 'n substantief, bevat. In die teenoorgestelde geval, d.w.s. waar 'n possessiewe stam optree, word die bepaling as *connectief* gekenmerk (elders die alternatiewe benaming vir konjunktief, bindwoord). Hierdeur word nogtans nie 'n basiese onderskeiding vasgelê nie, „want in den grond zyn de possessieven connectieven met pronominale stam." By ideofone word eweneens 'n onderverdeling voorgestaan, naamlik in onamatopeë en eintlike ideofone. Behalwe dat by ideofone die weergawe 'n groter verskeidenheid van gewaarwordinge dek, word geen verdere kriterium ter onderskeiding van die twee aangegee nie.

Die talryke verwysings na bronne, en veral die bibliografieë wat aan die slot van bepaalde hoofstukke, of selfs van onderdele van hoofstukke, gestel word, is 'n besondere verdienste van die boek. Dit sowel as die eenvoudige taal waarin prof. Burssens sy gedagtes stel, dra aansienlik daartoe by om die doel waarvoor die handleiding geskryf is te verwesenlik.

J.A.E.

Isakhono somfazi namanye amabalana. GUYBON B. SINXO. Afrikaanse Pers-Boekhandel, Johannesburg. 1956. 78 pp.

This Xhosa book, written in the latest orthography, is composed of three stories, the last of which "Inkunzi eyadala isizwe", is a folk-tale

The first two stories are original and are both didactic. The first, "Isakhono somfazi" (A woman's dexterity), is the chief story and aims at showing what a good woman can achieve; while the second is intended to show that one's good deeds may benefit one's own children.

The first story is that of a boy whose widowed mother and sister work themselves to the bone as domestic servants in Johannesburg, in order to give him higher education. He completes his studies and while employed as a teacher, develops into an outstanding author. He finally comes to Johannesburg "to gain more experience of life". He is caught in the snares of a bad woman and is reduced to the status of a "hobo". He is rescued by his loyal lover from his home and they return to "Njwaxa" where they "live happily ever after".

The second story tells of a boy from the country who came to Johannesburg where he fell into the hands of robbers who were on the point of killing him when he was recognized by their leader as the son of a man who had once done him a kindness. The leader ordered his immediate release.

Both stories are in the true Sinxo tradition. They abound in moralization, as they needs must, if the author is to carry out what he considers to be the sacred duty of an author: "To preach, not only from the church pulpits, but from the pulpits of the world, to a world congregation".

Sinxo was once accused by Dr R. H. W. Shepherd of depicting too much of town life, "with its undesirable features". In these stories he emphasizes with depressing intensity, just those "undesirable features". Again, one feels, this is because he has cast himself in the role of a preacher.

East London and Port Elizabeth have both featured in Sinxo's previous novels. Now it is Johannesburg's turn and Sinxo's opinion is that of all the evil towns in South Africa, Johannesburg takes first prize. The few good people there are in the city—invariably "Christians"—are fighting a grim and, one feels, a losing battle against the overwhelming forces of the devil.

The language, of course, is impeccable, as Sinxo's language always is, and his keen sense of humour and profound knowledge of the ways of boys and the tongues of women, make the book most readable.

An unfortunate feature in the book is the host of typographical errors, e.g. p. 56 *imkhaphe* for *imkhabe*, *umvusa* for *emvusa*. Interesting also, is Sinxo's use of *ave* in the Present Subjunctive where one would have expected *eve* from the verbal radical -(*i*)*v*- (hear). Unfortunately, one cannot be sure whether Sinxo has used the form deliberately, or whether, again, it is a typographical error.

R. M. SOBUKWE

Rechtspraakfabels van de Nkundó. G. HULSTAERT and A. DE ROP. Annalen van het Koninklijk Museum van Belgisch-Kongo, Tervuren, Linguistiek, Deel 8. Commissie voor Afrikaanse Taalkunde, Tervuren. 1954. ix+170 pp.

In a certain land four women lived with their husband. One day they all paid visits to their respective homes. The first wife returned from her home bringing an arrow-point, the second an arrow shaft, the third a bow and the fourth a string. They presented all these things to their husband. Out of these he made a bow and an arrow, and therewith killed an animal. A dispute then arose, each wife claiming the whole animal on the ground that her contribution towards the making of the weapon was the most important. Which of these four has a right to the animal?

The solution states that the four women must share the animal but the one who is entitled to the biggest share is the one who brought the arrow-point because it is more valuable than a bow, a string or a shaft: Many a man can make a bow, a string or a shaft, but an arrow-point is the work of a black-smith, that is, it is specialized work; and finally one only looks for a bow, a

string and a shaft when one has already procured an arrow-point.

This story is an example of the type that is contained in this volume. It is a type that occurs so sporadically in the collections of the tales of many tribes in Africa that it seemed hardly likely that there could be so many of this type in any single tribe. From this point of view then, this volume is welcome and should lead to a search for stories of this type in other tribes as well.

The tales were collected in Nkundó by African collectors whose names are given after each tale. The Nkundó text is given as well as the Flemish translation. This method of presentation is of great help to research workers. It often happens that a solution to a problem may lie in a single word in the original. But if such a word has been wrongly translated and there is no original with which to check, such a problem may well elude the research worker. This method should also prove useful to students of linguistics and in this connection the tonological signs in the Nkundó text deserve mention. To anthropologists these tales should throw interesting light on the rules of justice and some of the customs of these people.

The narration of these tales is an intellectual game just like the telling of other tales. They too are told in the evening round the fire or in the moonlight. After the problem has been set, it is not difficult to see the thrill that members of the audience get out of expressing their own personal opinions on the merits of each case, a joy that is not spoilt even by the announcement of the solution, because there is often not one solution possible but many. In this collection we have then an additional type which, along with the other types of folk-tales, made up that great body of oral literature which entertained so many generations in the past. For this addition our thanks must go, not only to those who issued this volume but also to the many collectors without whose co-operation the work might not have appeared.

S. M. M.

Hikmad Soomaali. M. H. I. GALAAL and B. W. ANDRZEJEWSKI. Annotated African Texts, No. IV. Oxford University Press, London. 1956. xi+150 pp. 25s.

This is the fourth of the series put out by the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London. The Somali stories have been written down by Mr Muuse Galaal, himself a Somali, and edited by B. W. Andrzejewski, Lecturer in Cushitic languages at the School of Oriental and African Studies. The texts of the stories occupy pp. 29-61. They are preceded by a Grammatical Introduction by the editor, and followed by some 90 pages of informative notes, also by the editor, dealing with matters of grammar, vocabulary and tribal custom. The modified form of orthography used is explained and considerable space is given to a discussion of what the editor terms "frontness" of vowels, resulting in two sets of five each (again doubled for length distinctions). Miss L. E. Armstrong, in her "Phonetic Structure of Somali", had used variant phonetic symbols for four of these: Andrzejewski, however, uses the same five symbols (*i*, *e*, *a*, *o*, and *u*), making the distinction by means of a cedilla diacritic in each case when "fronted". Tone is discussed in the introduction, but not marked in the texts themselves. Capital letters are used to distinguish two of the pronouns from otherwise similarly written prepositions. A useful bibliography of Somali is included.

The texts, in themselves, are valuable literary material both for the preservation of Somali lore, and for the use of comparative folklorists. It is to be hoped that more of the Somali poems, stories and proverbs, which the editor says Mr Galaal has, will reach publication. But the present work, naturally, is designed for students of Somali, and it is certainly to be highly commended for that purpose.

Bound in strong cloth binding, and beautifully printed, this book of "Somali Wisdom" is decidedly a literary acquisition, though the price may prove high.

C. M. D.

Togoland. JAMES S. COLEMAN. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Columbia University Press. New York. 1956. 91 pp. 25 cents.

The achievement of independence by Ghana raised a delicate issue in international law concerning the future of the neighbouring trust territories of British and French Togoland. In a plebescite the British part of Togoland voted to join Ghana. The French, although enlarging local authority, were reluctant to contemplate an end to their trusteeship in Togoland, and the questions involved have not yet been settled at UN. Professor Coleman is well qualified to describe the whole problem. His booklet is of special value to those without access to UN records or other relevant literature.

J.L.

Non-Self-Governing Territories: Summaries and Analyses of information transmitted to the Secretary General during 1954. UNITED NATIONS. New York. 1955. 285 pp. 22s. 6d.

This is the ninth of an annual series of publications summarizing and analyzing the information on Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted to the Secretary-General by the Administering Members.

Part I of this publication contains an examination of general questions connected with the treatment of information on Non-Self-Governing Territories, with chapters on international collaboration and technical assistance, and on Greenland.

Part II contains summaries of the information on Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted by the Administering Members in 1954, which were presented to the ninth regular session of the General Assembly and to the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories. The chapters are grouped according to areas: Central African Territories, East African Territories, Southern African Territories, Indian Ocean Territories, West African Territories, Mediterranean Territories and Other Territories. The following subjects are dealt with in respect of each country: Area and Population figures, Economic Conditions (agriculture, livestock, forestry, fisheries, mining, power, industry, transport, communications, public finance, banking, international trade), Social conditions (labour, wages, welfare, statistics, town and rural planning, standard of living, public health), and Educational conditions.

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